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HOW SHOULD ONE STUDY ETHNICITY AND NATIONALISM?

David N. Gellner

Bhattachan's review of Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom

In a recent issue of *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* (Vol. 25:1, pp. 111-130) Dr. Krishna Bhattachan has favoured a book that I co-edited, *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Nepal* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1997), with a long and detailed review. He has raised many important issues about the book and, more generally, about how academics should study and write about ethnicity and nationalism. To these points and criticisms, in a spirit of engaged scholarly debate, I would like to offer a personal response (I speak for myself only; my co-editors are more than capable of defending their own views). It is a tribute to the seriousness and comprehensiveness of his review, I would argue, that it has stimulated such a lengthy reply.

Dr. Bhattachan has questioned whether such a book should not have covered all Nepal's castes and ethnic groups and he writes: "Why were three articles on the Rais included but none on the many other ethnic groups...? Why was there not a single article about the Bahuns and Chetris...? Why was [sic] there no articles about the Dalits and Muslims?... Why did the Maithils get priority over the Bhojpuris and Abadhis...?" (1998: 113). The simple answer to these questions is that the book was never intended to be an encyclopaedia, with equal coverage of every group, but rather to provide a representative sample of in-depth, ethnographic studies. Since the authors took different angles, and since Nepal's different groups really are different, it would have been counterproductive to impose a fixed format and list of questions for contributors to address. It was not meant to be that kind of book. It was intended to be illustrative without being exhaustive. Had the encyclopaedic approach been adopted there would have been no space for

authors to develop the ethnographic insights that are, I believe, the unique strength of the book. It is true that there are three chapters on the Rai (if one includes the Yakka among the Rai, which itself is debatable); but these three chapters complement each other, and taken together provide a very valuable understanding of eastern Nepal. Certainly it would have been helpful to have had ethnographic articles exploring changing forms of identity among Bahuns, Chetris, Magars, and Dalits, and I regret that these groups were not covered. But the book was already long and we were very lucky that Harwood Academic Publishers was willing to take it at all at this length.

Size and Cost of Books Published in the West

The book is, as Dr Bhattachan points out, very expensive. It is important here not to exaggerate the power of Western academics. Certainly, they work in conditions and at salaries that compare very favourably with those of academics and intellectuals in developing countries. But they do not work under easy conditions of their own choosing, and only a minority of 'superstars', mostly based in the USA, have the power to publish where and in whatever format they please. Unfortunately the length of the book (the editors' attempt to be as representative as possible) undermined the case for a paperback and therefore a cheap and easily available book. I take heart at Dr Bhattachan's suggestion that it would be useful if the book were translated into Nepali and other languages of Nepal.

The Question of Instrumentalism

Dr Bhattachan makes a very good point that whatever theory of motivation is used should be applied consistently: if it is applied to activists it ought to be also applied to those who resist them. It is certainly correct to ask, not just 'Who will benefit if ethnic demands are met?' but: 'Who will benefit if ethnic demands are not met?' It is one of the main points of ethnic activists the world over that, when the playing field is not level to start with, the liberal rule of treating like cases alike and appointing to positions on merit in fact favours the dominant group (cf. Bhattachan 1998: 116).

How Should One Study Ethnicity and Nationalism?

Rule One: Nationalism is not natural.

The first rule for the scholarly study of these phenomena is to recognize that ethnicity and nationalism are not 'natural', 'inherent', or 'eternal'. To

assume that national feeling or identification in any of these things is the position usually taken up by nationalists. This should make it hard for scholars to be apologists for particular nationalisms; but there have been, and still are, many academics who do take on this role.

Nationalism is in fact adopted by some people in certain contexts, and not by other people in other contexts. At some historical periods the phenomena of nationalism are simply absent; even when they do occur, they are not equally shared by all classes, by both genders, by all ethnic groups, and so on. Thus nationalism, far from being a natural, inevitable phenomenon, needs to be explained. In Nepal, as in most countries of the world, there is and has been a conscious process of nation-building. Eugen Weber's book, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, is a classic account of how culturally and linguistically diverse people were trained, through schooling, military service, and the disciplines of the market into speaking French and adopting urban ways. The nation, he concludes, has to be seen "not as a given reality but as a work-in-progress, a model of something at once to be built and to be treated for political reasons as already in existence" (ibid.: 493). Before the time about which Weber writes (1870-1914) there were numerous parts of France where the French language was simply not understood. French citizens had to be forced, often unwillingly, to see themselves as French. (For a study of the Breton minority in France, which, in spite of its title, shows that the majority of ordinary Bretons do indeed see themselves as French, see Maryon McDonald's *We are not French!*)

Thus there are many times and places where people have no particular national or ethnic feelings: their ties to other people are much more local; and their religious or political allegiances may go far beyond the nation or ethnic group (Anderson 1983). Still today many ordinary people feel no particular attachment to their culture; they are happy to change it and adapt it, and feel no great loss at so doing – to the anger or despair of cultural nationalists. It is a matter of common observation that many Nepalis whose mother tongue is not Nepali none the less speak Nepali to their children. This is a very common phenomenon which has happened in many parts of the globe. A glance at the Vienna telephone directory reveals the etymological evidence of linguistic change at the heart of the Hapsburg Empire: numerous were the subjects of the Hapsburg who switched from various Slav languages (or Yiddish if they were Jewish) to German as the official language, the language of science, education, and progress, as it was then seen to be.

Rule Two: Nationalism and ethnicity need to be studied from the bottom up.

The second rule for the study of nationalism and ethnicity is that they need to be studied ethnographically, i.e. from the bottom up. What does this mean in practice? It means following the widely accepted norms of ethnographic fieldwork: living with the people being studied and conversing with them in their own language(s). As far as practicable it means sharing their own way of life (there may be limits, especially with very poor populations, as graphically described by Moffatt 1979). In other words, it means not restricting oneself to administering, or having someone else administer, a list of closed and quantifiable questions (such methods have their place for certain purposes, but are incapable of revealing the subtle, contextual, and changing nature of people's deepest identifications). Nor does it mean restricting oneself to occasional, open-ended interviews (though this latter method can sometimes attain the range and depth of ethnographic insight of participant observation, if the research is already 'at home' in the culture). For most ordinary people, in situations such as contemporary Nepal, nationalism and ethnicity play only an occasional role in their conscious lives, much of the time being a kind of backdrop of which they are hardly aware. In such a situation, the social-scientific researcher will get a better understanding of the role of nationalism and ethnicity in ordinary people's lives by trying to obtain a rounded, holistic picture of their whole way of life, and of their interactions with others, by hanging around long enough to observe those interactions for themselves, and not just relying on other people's accounts of them.

Dr Bhattachan points out that the book lacks contributions by political scientists. This is true. Political scientists have not been slow to contribute to analyses of Nepal post-1990 (see Kumar 1995, 2000). Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom was intended to be ethnographically based, that is to say, based on detailed case studies, regardless of the disciplinary allegiance of the writer. Claire Burkert's paper (Burkert 1997) was written by someone without formal social-science training; but it provides a subtle, ethnographic analysis of Maithil identity, incorporating a very valuable focus on gender, based on long acquaintance with the region. Political scientists have sometimes provided theoretically significant contributions to ethnographic approaches (one thinks particularly of Scott's works on the study of resistance: Scott 1985, 1990). There was certainly no intent to exclude political scientists, per se; rather, the concern was to get below and

beyond simple description of immediate political processes, to study 'from the bottom up'.

Rule Three: One should not assume that ethnic activists and ordinary people share the same agenda.

This rule follows from Rule Two. Ordinary people may well have many of the same feelings as the activists about their own group and about neighbouring groups (on the other hand, they may get on very well with neighbouring groups). Ordinary people may be willing to support the activists under certain circumstances (on the other hand, they may regard the activists as living on another planet). But they do not devote their life to advancing the ethnic cause; they may consider it extreme, or a waste of time, or unnecessary, etc. It is a common mistake by scholars of all disciplines, including anthropology, to take the activists' views for those of the people on whose behalf they claim to speak. It is, of course, easy to speak to activists and to find out their views: the fact that they are activists means that they have articulated their views, written them down, and are keen to disseminate them. Activists often seek out social science researchers because they need an audience and are delighted to find an attentive one, an audience which may lend them respectability by publicizing their views abroad. Listening only to ethnic activists is to commit the same methodological error as those students of religion who talk only to ritual specialists. Adopting a 'bottom-up' perspective means not taking the discourse of ethnic activists at face value.

Rule Four: Researchers should be aware of the fluidity of boundaries.

The nationalist picture in the modern world presupposes that everyone has one and only one nation, and one and only one ethnic attachment ('Thou shalt have one and only one ethnic identity!'). Where people have dual attachments that lead to conflicting or opposing loyalties, this is treated as an anomaly that has to be ironed out, and is dismissed as an exception. But in fact, in the premodern, pre-nationalist world, people very often do have multiple and overlapping attachments. They may belong to one group for some purposes and other groups for different purposes. They may belong to a group that has one kind of identity in relation to some groups, and a different sort of identity in relation to other groups. The boundaries of states in the premodern world were notoriously fluid and undefined. Social attachments, which today are supposed to determine a unique and unequivocal ethnic

attachment, were determined by different criteria. The majority of the Rajopadhyaya Brahmins of the Kathmandu valley do not today see themselves as Newars, do not call themselves Newars, do not speak Newar to their children, and do not support Newar ethnic activism. Yet they are seen as Newars by many others, an identification (one or two well-known intellectuals apart) which they themselves reject. This is by no means an isolated case. Andrew Russell's paper about the Yakha describes another small group that is able to claim various different identities on different occasions; and Charles Ramble's paper about Bhotiyas shows how they construct localized ethnic identities that reject a pan-Bhotiya formulation (Russell 1997, Ramble 1997).

The nationalist and ethno-nationalist picture tends to downplay the importance of mixture, both in the past and today, a conceptual error that is usually labelled 'essentialism'. In fact, as is well known, the various different castes and ethnic groups of today intermarried very greatly. The Chetri caste was able to spread so fast throughout the country and became its largest group by means of intermarriage, as described by Fürer-Haimendorf (1966); even the offspring of Bahun men and tribal women (i.e. children with no Chetri genes at all) became Chetris. Because such marriages go against both the ideology of caste and the modern ideology of ethnicity, they are not celebrated and are forgotten as quickly as the social network allows. But it is perhaps time that reflective and liberal nationalists, keen to find a new basis for a multicultural Nepal, began to celebrate and even encourage such mixture. As Whelpton writes, "It is surely time for the House of Gorkha to reclaim its Magar heritage" (Whelpton 1997: 73). (See further the conclusion, point 4, below.)

Rule Five: Nationalism and ethnicity should be studied in historical context.

In order to understand how feelings of nationalism and ethnicity have developed, it is essential to study how they have changed over time, and not to assume, as nationalists tend to do, that these were the same in the past as they are today (see Rule One). In this context, research on the actual formation of early Nepali nationalism is particularly valuable (Burghart 1984, Onta 1996, 1997, 1999), because it prevents it from being taken for granted. It is quite wrong to project back from the present to Prithvi Narayan's time, or to the Rana period, the kind of national feelings that are conventional today. Hence the inclusion in Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom of

several, contrasting historical studies (Whelpton 1997, Michaels 1997, Hutt 1997, Pfaff-Czarnecka 1997). The work of ethnic nationalists to rediscover histories that have been ignored in the official versions encouraged by the state might fall into this category, providing they do not merely mirror and reproduce the projective errors of the official histories they are arguing against.

Sentiments of attachment are framed and conditioned by the politics and pressures of their own time. One consequence of this is that, though national and ethnic feelings are not inevitable, and may not be found, in some periods of history, it is in fact the case that in today's environment, when the whole global order presupposes nation-states, they do indeed have a kind of inevitability. But, as I have argued, the extent to which they are part of ordinary people's life-world today is a variable and empirical question that can only be established by careful and open-minded ethnographic fieldwork, and cannot be predicted or assumed in advance of such study. My own contribution to *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom* attempted to understand, by providing both historical and sociological background, how it was that the Newars, with a strong sense of their own cultural identity, none the less were very slow – slower than other ethnic groups of Nepal – to give any form of political expression to this (Gellner 1997).

Some Conclusions

(1) Most ordinary people are essentially concerned about their family's economic survival. If this means speaking to their children in Nepali rather than in their own mother tongue, if it means cutting down on expensive rituals, switching to a non-traditional method of performing them, or abandoning them altogether, most people do this without great psychic cost. Most people are not particularly nationalist or especially communal most of the time. This may be fortunate or unfortunate, depending on your point of view, but it is, I believe, a fact.

(2) The alliance between some of the more extreme ethnic nationalists and the Maoists that appears to have emerged recently in Nepal is, to me, surprising. Certainly it has been encouraged by the Maoists themselves, but it is surely naive to treat the Maoists as if they were just another political party whose election manifesto is to be examined to see how much succour it offers to one's favourite causes. There have been enough Marxist-Leninist regimes in

the twentieth-century for the autocratic, centralist, and oppressive implications of Marxism as a ruling ideology to be obvious to any properly educated person. Given the proximity of Nepal to Tibet, and the long-term presence of Tibetan refugees in Nepal, there is no excuse for Nepali intellectuals being unaware of the consequences of a Maoist regime for ethnic activism. There may be so-called autonomous regions in the PRC but there is no real autonomy.

(3) Indiscriminate attacks on all members of one ethnic group or caste have no place in scholarly discourse and still less should individuals be attacked for a background which they did not choose. Krishna Bhattachan may not agree with Prayag Raj Sharma's arguments about the position of Bahuns in contemporary Nepal or the role of Hinduization and Sanskritization in producing a nascent national identity (Sharma 1997), but to label his arguments as "de-contextualized, ahistoric, narcissist, illogical, sometimes senseless and baseless" (Bhattachan 1998: 126) is to fail to live up to the canons of acceptable scholarly or engaged intellectual debate. The seriousness of the issue for contemporary Nepal surely requires its foremost sociologists both to acknowledge ethnic inequalities and to advocate national unity, on whatever basis.

(4) In the light of the fluidity of boundaries in actual social practice (as opposed to the traditional and modern folk models that are used to describe it), any government that was serious about both acknowledging ethnic attachments, while wanting simultaneously to 'unify the nation', might think about the categories that are on offer for Nepali citizens to tick in the next census. If there were options to tick more than one box, or none, whether under the heading of religion or that of ethnic group or caste, there might be a surprising number of people who chose either to tick more than one, or to tick none. (I have argued this point in a recent paper: Gellner 2001.) Presumably today's sophisticated, computer-aided, statistical techniques would be well able to deal with the results. Such a step would enable the census to reflect more accurately social developments within the country and might prevent the figures from becoming even more of a political hot potato.

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SOCIO-CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF BIRTH INTERVALS IN NEPAL

Juhee V. Suwal

Event histories such as birth, pregnancy, and marriage have been used by social scientists to study fertility behaviour of women. Birth history analysis undoubtably provides useful information regarding reproduction and family formation. Fertility depends not only on the decisions of couples but also on many socioeconomic, demographic, health-related as well as tradition-related and emotional factors. The factors affecting fertility may have varying effects on child spacing. Thus, birth intervals experienced by women may reveal some insights about their reproduction patterns. Moreover, a detailed analysis of the sequence of steps in the childbearing process could provide a more comprehensive picture of the dynamics of fertility transitions (Hirschman and Rindfuss, 1980). The purpose of this paper is to analyze three consecutive birth intervals to gain a better understanding of the fertility behaviour of Nepalese women.

Bongaart (1978) found that the level of fertility in a group of women depends mainly on four intermediate variables: the proportion that is married, postpartum infecundability, contraception, and induced abortion. In other words, differences in exposure to the risk of pregnancy and differences in the length of time between births when women are exposed may contribute to differentials in childbearing levels (Trussell et al., 1985). Whatever the cause, the length of birth intervals may vary from one population of women to another.

Social scientists believe that differences in birth-interval lengths are explained by varying breastfeeding patterns, contraceptive use, frequency of intercourse, incidence of abortion, and fecundity (Trussell et al., 1985). Differences in other factors such as women's roles and status and the value of children may also influence the birth intervals. There is no doubt that the

socioeconomic, demographic, health and cultural background of a country, consequently that of women, affects the above factors. In addition, factors affecting family size were found to vary by birth parity (West, 1987).

Factors Affecting Birth Intervals

Women's education and age at marriage are the most widely analyzed determinants of birth intervals. The former is found to have a substantial effect on birth-interval length (Hirschman and Rindfuss, 1980; Rindfuss et al., 1983). However, in a study done in a village of Kerala State in India, Nair (1996) did not find any significant effects in terms of the education of women either on the first or the second or the third birth intervals. In addition, female education was found to be an insignificant determinant of the risk of pregnancy in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia (Trussell et al., 1985). Nevertheless, male education and occupation were found to be significant determinants of fertility in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Age at marriage is considered to be an important variable in the fertility process. If couples marry at a very young age, decisions on number of children, use of contraceptives, and the like may be formed at a less mature age, consequently affecting the birth interval (Bumpass et al., 1978). Furthermore, since the effect of age at marriage possibly operates through biological and maturational factors rather than with respect to coital frequency (Kallan and Udry, 1986), age at marriage may have a varied effect on different birth intervals. Age at marriage correlates to age at first birth. For young women, West (1987) found that the first birth is an important determinant at the transition from parity one to parity two. For older women, he found its importance at the transition from parity two to parity three. Interestingly, his findings also showed that the younger a woman is at first birth, the higher the transition probability. In another study, Abdel-Aziz (1983) concluded that the later a Jordanian girl marries, the swifter she will bear her first child. A similar result was found in Nepal. The women of Tamang ethnicity, who married at age 19 or older, had higher chances of childbirth than those marrying at younger age (Fricke and Teachman, 1993).

A couple's decision on the timing of the first baby or the second or the third may depend on traditional norms and cultural practices as well. Ethnicity was found to be an important determinant of pregnancy in Malaysia (Rindfuss et al., 1983). Nair's (1996) analysis of birth intervals suggested that a significant differential existed between Hindus and Muslims in Kerala for the

first and the second birth intervals, but not for the third birth interval. Confucian women were found to have their first birth at least 2.5 to 3 years later than Muslim and Hindu women (Rindfuss et al., 1983). This suggests that religion is an important factor in the fertility behaviour of women in Asia.

Place of residence may be another important factor influencing birth intervals. According to the place of residence, people's customs and lifestyles may differ. Rural women may breastfeed for a longer duration than urban women, urban women may use contraceptives more often than rural women, and the socioeconomic status of urban women may be higher than that of rural women, resulting in better health and knowledge of and easier access to contraception for the former.

There have been a few empirical studies done in Nepal on birth intervals. However, the diversified cultural and religious practices, preference for sons, varied lifestyles in different regions of the country, different types of marriages (such as arranged, cross-cousin, capture, elopement, polygynous, fraternal polyandry, and self-spouse selection) in different ethnic groups, illegality of abortion, and social environments make research on this area not only interesting but also rewarding to gain insight into the fertility behaviour of Nepalese women.

This article intends to explore several questions regarding the socioeconomic, demographic, and cultural differentials on birth intervals. Do the levels of education and different occupations of women or their spouses affect the timing of births? Does age has to do anything with the birth intervals? Do the cultural and religious differences of women affect the duration of births? Or is it the sex of the first/second child/children that determines the waiting period between the later births? What factors influence birth intervals the most for the women in the past and the young women today?

Data and Methods

The data source for this study is the Nepal Fertility, Family Planning and Health Survey, 1991, which was conducted under the Demographic Health Survey (DHS), Macro International Inc., Maryland, U.S.A. The sample size was 25,384, of which 5.3 percent were urban and 94.7 percent were rural women. The sample unit is women in the age group 15-49 who were living with their husbands at the time of the survey.

Time-constant Cox regression is used for the statistical analysis of the data. The model, also known as the Cox proportional hazards model, is given by:

$$h(t) = [h_0(t)]e^{B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + \dots + B_nX_n}$$

where, $X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n$ are the covariates (i.e. independent variables)

$B_1, B_2, \dots, B_n$ are the respective coefficients of each covariate that are also known as relative risks in the Cox regression.

$h_0(t)$ is the common baseline (reference group) hazard or duration-dependent risk. The duration dependent risk is the "chance of being pregnant" in this case.

$h(t)$, the hazard function (birth interval or duration variable in this case), is the dependent variable. This is the product of the duration-dependent risk $h_0(t)$ and the effect of $X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n$ for any given set of values of these variables.

The hazard function enables one to estimate the relative risks of other groups in relation to the baseline group (Balkrishnan et al., 1987). Cox regression is useful for analyzing events with duration-specific risks. Furthermore, the Cox regression model can be used to analyze data that contain censored observations (Norusis, 1994). Multiple linear regressions cannot be used for analysis of time-to-event data because it cannot handle censored observations. Censoring is caused by the incomplete experience of the events studied (Halli and Rao, 1992). Only event history analysis can make use of the information on censored (incomplete) observations.

For the current study, the "events" are the first union with a husband, the first birth, the second birth and the third birth. Censoring in this case is "no birth" or non-occurrence of birth in a particular "event" of birth. Thus, the cases in which women do not have any children until the day of the survey are "censored" cases for the first birth interval. Those women who already have one child but have not given birth to a second child until the day of the survey are "censored" for the second birth interval. Similarly, women with only two children on the survey day are "censored" cases for the third birth interval.

The dependent variables are the first birth interval (duration of marriage to the first birth), the second birth interval (duration between the first and the second births), and the third birth interval (period between the second and the third births). Each dependent variable is analyzed separately by Cox regression. The independent variables selected are respondent's place of residence, religion, ethnicity, current age, age at first union (with the

husband), cash earning, education, occupation, education of husband, occupation of husband, and sex of previous child/children.

Measurement

Among the independent variables, "age of respondent" and "age at first union" are measured by the actual age in years. Residence is recoded as urban 1 and rural 0, cash earning as earning 1 and not earning 0, sex as male 1 and female 0 for both the second and the third births. In all the cases, '0' denotes the reference category. Ethnicity, religion, education, and occupation are categorical variables, recoded as 1 to 4 or 1 to 5 (Table 1).

Table 1 : Measurement of Categorical Variables

Variable	Categories	Value ¹
Ethnicity ²	Brahmin+ Chhetri	1
	Newar	2
	Mongoloid groups	3
	Other	4
Religion	Hindu	1
	Buddhist	2
	Muslim	3
	Other	4
Education Level	Never attended school to Primary Level (0 to grade 5)	1
	Middle school level (grade 6 to 9)	2
	School Leaving Certificate (SLC or grade 10) ³	3
	Post secondary level	4
Occupation	Agriculture	1
	Business + Cottage industry Service (administrators, technicians, professionals, etc.)	2
	Daily wages	4
	Other (students, unemployed, etc.)	5

Limitations

In spite of useful information regarding fertility behaviour and family formation, birth history analysis has several limitations. Recall lapse by the

older women is one of the most reported errors (Bogue and Bogue, 1970; Brass, 1980; Singh et al., 1988). In other studies, misreporting of age, and omission of the first births were found (Kallan and Udry, 1986; Islam, 1988). Age heaping, recall lapse, and misreporting of the date of events are some of the common errors found in the surveys done in Nepal (Nepal Fertility, Family Planning and Health Survey, 1993; Central Bureau of Statistics, 1995; Nepal Family Health Survey, 1997). World Fertility Surveys in several countries have found that earliest births reported by older women tend to be "moved forward" toward the present. This resulted in longer first birth intervals for older women than for younger ones (Kallan and Udry, 1986). Such misreporting may be common in Nepal because rural populations may consider early or immediate conception following marriage as shameful. Moreover, women who had given birth in previous marriages may not want to report those births. Other birth omissions may be those of dead children. In the analysis section, although breastfeeding, contraceptive use, and induced abortion are considered to be important intermediate factors that influence birth intervals and through which socioeconomic and demographic factors affect births, they had to be excluded for several reasons. The analysis of breastfeeding variable was not possible because of a large proportion of missing cases (about 90 %) in the data set. Since breastfeeding is universal in Nepal, it probably would have similar impact on all birth intervals across different cultural groups and regional populations. However, because Nepalese women tend to breastfeed the first born for a longer period than the subsequent children, the study of duration of breastfeeding on different birth intervals would have been useful and interesting, had the data allowed.

Birth spacing is not a popular practice in Nepal as most couples who use contraceptives are interested in sterilization once they have the desired number of children. Among the 24.1 percent women who were using any modern family planning method in 1991 Nepal Fertility, Family Planning, and Health Survey, only 4.5 percent were using birth spacing methods, the rest 19.6 percent had been sterilized (either wives sterilized or the husbands). Even though the spacers increased slowly from 0.9 percent in 1976 to 2.1 percent in 1986 to 4.5 percent in 1991, because this study involves three consecutive birth intervals, the spacers in the old cohort (in the past) may be very small for analysis purpose. Thus, this variable had to be dropped from the current analysis.

Also, because of the lack of official data on induced abortion, it is not possible to study the effect of this factor on birth intervals. Finally, the interpretation of the findings for "ethnicity" categorical variable should be done with cautious because ethnicity is divided into four categories by combining a number of groups, and thus the different cultural and social practices within these categories may influence on the results, producing confused conclusions. For example, although categorized as "Mongoloid", the Sherpas practice polyandry while the Gurungs prefer cross-cousin marriage, and the category "other" includes more than 40 ethnic groups. One additional limitation worth mentioning is that as the average birth intervals (Table 2) are computed from complete as well as incomplete (censored as well as truncated) intervals, the results may be biased to some extent.

Results

When we look at the average birth intervals (Table 2) the first birth interval is the longest of all the three intervals. Couples, on average, waited for almost four years before they had their first baby. The average second and third birth intervals do not differ much. Couples seem to wait almost three years, on average, for their second and the third child.

Table 2 : Average Birth Intervals in Nepal, 1991.

Birth Intervals	Average Period (in years)
First	3.9
Second	2.8
Third	2.9

There may be several reasons why couples have longer first birth interval than the other two intervals. First, because of the usual young age at marriage of Nepalese women, they may not yet be biologically ready to become pregnant. Second, since most of the marriages are arranged, couples may need time to establish an intimate relationship. Third, women in some cultures may spend more time in their natal home than their husband's home before they have their first child. And finally, Nepalese women are by nature shy and modest about sex.

Table 3 presents the Cox regression results for each of the three birth intervals when the variables were entered one at a time. Each result shows the individual effect of a particular variable on different birth intervals. Table 4, on the other hand, gives the result of Cox regression for each independent variable when the effects of the remaining variables are controlled. A positive value of B indicates a higher hazard (chance) of pregnancy and, consequently, a shorter birth interval that may result in higher fertility.

The summary of the results from Table 3 is presented below in a tabular form. The positive or the negative sign of the hazard coefficient B depicts the shorter or longer birth interval in the three equations.

Table 3 : Cox Regression Results for the First, the Second, and the Third Birth Intervals when Socio-economic and Demographic Variables are Considered One at a Time, Nepal, 1991.

Variable	B (First birth interval)	B (Second birth interval)	B (Third birth interval)
Residence (urban)	.2669*	.1201*	-.1820*
Age of respondent	-.0257*	-.0021*	.0047*
Age at first union	.0852*	-.0089*	-.0154*
Ethnicity (Brahmin + Chhetri)			
Newar	.3614*	.0342	-.1938*
Mongoloid	.1791*	-.0262	-.0021
Other	.0052	.0052	.0367
Religion (Hindu)			
Buddhist	.1296*	-.0992*	-.0416
Muslim	-.2021*	.0293	.1625*
Other	.1871*	-.0046	-.0091
Education of women (0 - grade 5)			
Middle school (grade 6 - 9)	.2133*	.0880	-.0998
School Leaving Certificate (SLC or Gr. 10)	.3150*	.0343	-.4032*
Post secondary	.3004*	-.1526	-1.2857*

Variable	B (First birth interval)	B (Second birth interval)	B (Third birth interval)
Education of husband (0 - grade 5)			
Middle school (grade 6 - 9)	.0398	.0107	-.0733*
School Leaving Certificate (SLC or Gr. 10)	.1418*	-.0082	-.1387*
Post secondary	.1649*	-.0092	-.2904*
Occupation of women (agriculture)			
Business + cottage industry	.2034*	.1282*	-.0708
Service	.4383*	-.0979	-.5657*
Daily wages	-.0835*	.0052	.0105
Other	.0838*	.0233	-.0489*
Occupation of husband (agriculture)			
Business + cottage industry	.1357*	.0920*	-.0818*
Service	.0978*	-.0817*	-.2428*
Daily wages	-.0227	-.0171	-.0076
Other	-.0276	-.1779*	-.0580
Cash earning by women (yes)	-.0136	.0116	-.0315
Sex of first child (male)	-	-.0552*	-.1016*
Sex of second child (male)	-	-	-.1149*
Compared to rural, urban women have	Shorter	Shorter	Longer
Higher the age of women	Longer	Longer	Shorter
Higher the age at first union with husband	Shorter	Longer	Longer
Compared to Brahmins and Chhetris, (see Table 1 for def.)			
Newar women have	Shorter	-	Longer
Mongoloid women have	Shorter	-	
Compared to Hindus,			
Buddhist women have	Shorter	Longer	-
Muslim women have	Longer	-	Shorter
Women in 'other' have	Shorter	-	-

Variable	B (First birth interval)	B (Second birth interval)	B (Third birth interval)
Compared to women with Elementary or no education, women with middle sch have women with gr. 10 edu. Have women with post-sec edu.	Shorter Shorter Shorter	— — —	— Longer Longer
Compared to women whose husbands have ele. or no sch, husband's middle sch have husband's grade 10 edu. Have husband's post secondary have	— Shorter Shorter	— — —	Longer Longer Longer
Compared to women in agri., women in busi & cott. ind. women in service have (see Table 1 for definition) Women in daily wages have Women in 'other' occu. Have	Shorter Shorter Longer Shorter	Shorter — — —	— Longer — Longer
Compared to women whose Husbands are in agriculture, Husbands in bus. & cottage Industry have Husbands in service have Husbands in 'other' have	Shorter Shorter —	Shorter Longer Longer	Longer Longer —
If sex of 1st child is male,	—	Longer	Longer
If sex of 2nd child is male	—	—	Longer

*significant at $P \leq .05$.

When all the variables were entered together (Table 4), the Cox regression results show a different picture. Most of the effects that were significant in the earlier equations disappeared once the effect of each variable was isolated, controlling for effects of the remaining variables.

Table 4 shows that even when all the other effects are controlled, place of residence, age of respondent, age at first union, ethnicity, and education of women still have significant influences on the first birth interval. In other words, urban women still have shorter first birth intervals than rural ones ($B = 0.272$). As the age of the responding women increases, their first child is born later still holds true ($B = -.022$). The higher the age of women at first union with their husbands, the quicker they conceive the first child ($B = 0.099$). Mongoloid women have shorter first birth intervals than their Brahmin and Chettri peers ($B = 0.313$), and those women who have middle school education have a higher chance of being pregnant than those with elementary or no education ($B = 0.144$).

Interestingly, after the effects of all other factors are controlled, the influence of occupation of women (in "business or a cottage industry" versus "agriculture" category) on the timing of the first-born changes its direction. That is, women who are involved in a business or cottage industry wait longer to have their first child compared to those women whose occupation is agriculture ($B = -0.262$). This result suggests that there were effects from other variables, which led women involved in business and cottage industry to have their first child sooner than their peers in agricultural occupations (Table 3). So, once all other effects were held constant, the only effect of women's involvement in business and cottage industry shows a longer first birth interval. Also, equally interesting is the finding that those women whose husbands have "other" occupations (including students, the unemployed, seasonal migrants, etc.) conceive later than those whose husbands are involved in agriculture once the effect of this variable was isolated from effects of other variables ($B = -0.331$).

In the case of the second birth interval, all the significant effects shown in Table 3 disappear when the effects of other variables are controlled except for the influence of husband's occupation on the second birth. The result suggests that those women whose husbands are involved in a "business or cottage industry" wait longer for their second child than those whose husbands are involved in agriculture ($B = 0.193$).

Most of the effects on the third birth interval also disappear once other factors are considered suggesting that the disappearing effects were not acting

alone. Only the "age of respondent," "education of women," and "preference for sons" have significant effects on the third birth interval in this case. The finding that as the age of respondents increases, they tend to conceive early for the third time still holds true ($B = 0.020$). When the effect of women's education alone is analyzed, the result still shows that women with post-secondary education wait longer than those with elementary or no education ($B = -1.140$). Similarly, the finding that if the first or second born was a boy, women delay the pregnancy for their third child ($B = -0.281$ and $B = -0.332$ respectively) still gains support.

Table 4 : Cox Regression Results for the First, the Second, and the Third Birth Intervals when all the Socio-economic and Demographic Variables are Considered, Nepal, 1991.

Variable	B (First birth interval)	B (Second birth interval)	B (Third birth interval)
Residence (urban)	.2716*	.0058	.0557
Age of respondent	-.0224*	-.0024	.0200*
Age at first union	.0995*	-.0120	-.0225
Ethnicity (Brahmin + Chhetri)			
Newar	.1180	-.0892	-.2053
Mongoloid	.3132*	-.1092	-.1374
Other	.1439	-.0853	-.0154
Religion (Hindu)			
Buddhist	-.1744	-.0959	.0986
Muslim	-.2562	.2336	.5201
Other	-.0333	.0180	.2479
Education of women (0 - grade 5)			
Middle school (grade 6 - 9)	.1441*	.0520	-.0403
School Leaving Certificate (SLC or Gr. 10)	.1061	.1666	.0284
Post secondary	-.1219	.0357	-1.1401*

Variable	B (First birth interval)	B (Second birth interval)	B (Third birth interval)
Education of husband (0 - grade 5)			
Middle school (grade 6 - 9)	-.0163	-.0433	-.1905
School Leaving Certificate (SLC or Gr. 10)	.1469	.1796	-.1081
Post secondary	.0094	.1396	-.0286
Occupation of women (agriculture)			
business + cottage industry	-.2617*	.0184	-.1833
service	-.1344	-.3416	-.3613
daily wages	-.0735	-.1680	-.2288
other	-.5499	-.6474	-.2092
Occupation of husband (agriculture)			
business + cottage industry	.1697	-.0373	.0701
service	-.0156	-.1927*	-.1232
daily wages	.3303	.2304	-.3320
other	-.3308*	-.1471	.2143
Cash earning by women (yes)	.0635	.0258	.0834
Sex of first child (male)	-	.0342	-.2807*
Sex of second child (male)	-	-	-.3323*

* significant at $P \leq .05$.

Analysis is also done by age group: for younger women aged 15-34 and for older women aged 35-49 (Table 5). When we look carefully at Table 5, it is clear that for the younger women, more factors have significant influences on the birth intervals than for the older group. For the younger group, when age increases, pregnancy is delayed for the first child ($B = -0.024$) and speeded up for the second ($B = 0.019$) and the third child ($B = 0.036$). As age at first union with husband increases for these women, the first pregnancy is quicker ($B = 0.131$). Mogoloid women in this age group conceive earlier than Brahmin and Chhetri women for the first baby ($B = 0.268$).

Younger women with post-secondary level education wait longer for the third child than those with elementary or no education. One interesting finding that emerges for this group is that women in the "other" category of

occupation (which includes students, the unemployed, housemaids, etc.) wait longer before having their first baby than the women in agricultural occupations ($B = -1.124$). And younger women whose husbands are involved in a business or cottage industry conceive their first child earlier than those whose husbands are in agriculture ($B = 0.251$). But the women whose husbands are service holders wait longer for the second child than their peers whose husbands are in agricultural work ($B = -0.245$). Younger women also delay their pregnancy for the third child if their first or second child is a male ($B = -0.373$, $B = -0.348$ respectively).

For the older group of women (age 35-49), only two factors have significant effects on the first birth interval. For these women, as age at first union with their husbands increases, they tend to have their first child sooner ($B = 0.060$). And if their husbands are service holders, the first pregnancy comes later ($B = -0.398$). None of the factors have significant influence either on the second or the third birth intervals.

Table 5 : Cox Regression Results for the First, the Second, and the Third Birth Intervals by Women's Age Groups 15-34 and 35-49, Nepal, 1991.

Variables	Age 15-34			Age 35-49		
	B(1st birth)	B(2nd birth)	B(3rd birth)	B(4th birth)	B(5th birth)	B(6th birth)
Residence (urban)	.2264	.296	.0888	.2757	-.1061	.0506
Age of respondent	-.0236*	.0193*	.0366*	-.0228	-.0136	-.0069
Age at first union with husband	.1306*	-.0192	-.0346	.0601*	-.0133	.0047
Ethnicity (Brahmin+Chettri)						
Newar	.031	-.0884	-.3209	.3282	.0640	-.3567
Mongoloid	.2681*	-.0791	-.1301	.2681	-.0972	-.3710
Other	.1788	-.2148	.1470	-.0576	.2573	-.2662
Religion (Hindi)						
Buddhist	-.0220	-.0706	.1498	-.3466	-.2008	-.0082
Muslim	-.2337	.2797	.4252	-	-	-
Other	-.0773	-.0970	.4870	.0450	.08878	-.1310

Variables	Age 15-34			Age 35-49		
	B(1st birth)	B(2nd birth)	B(3rd birth)	B(4th birth)	B(5th birth)	B(6th birth)
Education of women (0 - grd 5)						
Grade 6-9	.1259	.0613	-.0282	.2352	.1997	-.0171
SLC or grade 10	.0631	.2108	.1512	.2851	-.0592	.1402
Post secondary	-.3976	.0445	-1.7049*	.5301	.0156	-.8837
Education of husbands (0 - grd 5)						
Grade 6 - 9	-.0582	-.0639	-.1694	.1501	.2397	-.0447
SLC or grade 10	.0804	.2259	-.2093	.3105	.3143	.0999
Post secondary	.0026	.0761	-.1002	.0923	.3093	.2281
Occupation of women (agriculture)						
business + cottage industry	-.1959	-.0226	-.2289	-.1472	.1985	-.1062
service	-.1885	-.2431	-.4226	.0931	-.1770	-.5778
daily wages	-.1702	-.0536	-.3313	.2789	-1.0710	1.0334
other	-.2808	-.3335	.3413	-.7584	.7557	-.0251
Cash earning by women (yes)	.1201	.0797	.0621	-.1456	-.1451	.3203
Sex of first child (male)	-	.0203	-.3729*	-	.0326	-.0464
Sex of second child (male)	-	-	-.3484*	-		-.2077

* significant at $P \leq .05$.

Discussion

The selected factors show various effects on different birth intervals; however, the first and the third births are the most affected ones. All the factors except for "cash earning by women" influence the timing of the first and the third births by shaping the length of birth intervals. But the second birth interval is affected neither by the ethnicity nor the education of women nor the education of husband nor cash earning by women (Table 3).

Among other things, this study of birth intervals indicates possible fertility decline among women with different characteristic background. In the first

scenario, when analysis was done for each independent variable, urban women having long third birth interval; higher age of women at first union with husband showing long second and third birth intervals; Newar women having a long third birth interval; Buddhist women showing a long second birth interval; grade 10 and post-secondary level educated women waiting long for the third birth; women with husbands' middle and post-secondary schooling waiting long for the third child; service holders and in 'other' occupation women having a long third birth interval; women with husbands involved in business and cottage industry waiting long for the third child, in service waiting long for the second and the third child, and in 'other' occupations waiting long for the second births, indicate that these women, probably, want less number of children. Thus their fertility may be expected to decrease eventually .

And the findings from the other scenario, the main equation, when the effect of each factor was analyzed by controlling for other effects (Table 4), show that place of residence, current age of women, age at first union, ethnicity, education, occupation, and occupation of husband are very strong factors in determining the length of the first birth interval. Similarly, the current age of women, education, sex of first child, and sex of the second child turned out to be the most influential factors in shaping the length of the third birth interval. However, occupation of husband is the only strong factor influencing the second birth interval.

Urban, Mongoloid women, and women with middle school education have higher chances of being pregnant for the first time. Also, the higher the age at first union the greater is the risk of being pregnant for the first time (Table 4).

Urban women may be more modern and outgoing. They may prefer modern marriages (the so-called "love marriages" or self spouse selection) rather than traditional arranged marriages . This may indicate that rural women are more modest about their sex lives than their urban sisters. Furthermore, sleeping arrangements in rural areas may affect their fertility behaviour. In some rural areas, mostly in the mountains, the sleeping room is a common big room for the whole family (Furer-Haimendorf, 1964). In other cases, mostly in the rural areas of South Nepal, rooms are divided by walls with open doors (no doors attached to lock the room). Thus, privacy for new couples is rare. Also, marriages are found to be more stable in urban areas compared to Nepal as a whole (Acharya, 1993). For all these reasons, the finding that urban women conceive earlier is not surprising.

Mongoloid women are by nature very frank, free and modern and prefer late marriages. Moreover, traditionally, they are not confined to arranged marriages, usually select spouses on their own (Furer-Haimendorf, 1964; Hitchcock, 1966; Johns and Johns, 1976; Messerschmidt, 1976). Compared to traditionally arranged marriages, romantically arranged ones are found to have greater coital frequency (Rindfuss and Morgan, 1983). Also, since most of the groups' cultures prefer cross-cousin marriages, they already know their future spouses and may have experienced close relationships. The findings of a study on the first birth interval among the Tamang women of Nepal suggested that the transition to family building within marriage pivots on the familiarity between couples and on a woman's comfort in the marital environment (Fricke and Teachman, 1993). In addition, premarital sex is acceptable in these groups (Furer-Haimendorf, 1964; Hitchcock, 1966; Johns and Johns, 1976; Messerschmidt, 1976; Macfarlane, 1976; Fricke, 1986; Fricke and Teachman, 1993). These facts may have enhanced their chance of becoming pregnant for the first child, compared to their Brahmin and Chhetri peers. The strong effect of ethnicity on the first birth interval is in line with the previous finding from Malaysia (Rindfuss et al., 1983).

Those women who have middle school education may be more modern, open and mature in age than those who have lower levels of schooling. Thus, the former may have a higher chance of getting pregnant than the latter. The delaying of first births by women involved in a business or cottage industry compared to those in agriculture may be explained by the fact that the former women need to spend more time in their work. Unlike women in agricultural work, they earn money in this occupation. But their husbands' occupations show different effects on the first birth. The category "other" under the husband's occupation includes students and the unemployed, as well as those associated with foreign military service, seasonal migration, and political work, which could have delayed the first births as they have to devote time for school, look for jobs or work away from home more often and for longer durations.

The higher risk of being pregnant for the first child as the age at first union with husband goes higher could be because women who are married at an older age may be more mature about and aware of their sexual relationships than those married at a younger age. Furthermore, since childbearing becomes more complicated as the age of women increases, and in particular for the first birth, older women may prefer to have their first baby as soon as possible. This finding supports the earlier research done in Jordan (Abdel-Aziz, 1983) and in Nepal (Fricke and Teachman, 1993).

On the other hand, women in the past (women in the older age group) tend to delay their first births. In general, when we look at the chance of being pregnant for women in the past and in recent years, chances for younger women may be higher than that for older women for several reasons. First, marriage patterns are changing slowly from traditional arranged to self (spouse) selected ones. Even in most of the arranged marriages these days, particularly in urban areas, couples have chances to know each other before they are married. Moreover, the media and women's development programmes (e.g. programmes related to health, nutrition, family planning and reproductive life, etc.) conducted by the national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs and INGOs) may have helped younger women to better understand sex life. Obviously, such programmes were rare in the past. The reason for the greater fecundity of women today is also attributed to an improvement in health conditions and nutritional levels (Abdel-Aziz, 1983). This explains the delay of first births by women in the past.

The second birth is hardly affected by these factors. In Nepal, people seem to care less about when the second baby comes once they had the first one. The findings suggest that the second birth is not given much importance vis-a-vis the first.

When it comes to the third child, the decision seems to depend mainly on the sex of the previous two children. The finding that Nepalese women delay their second and third births if the previous child/children was/were male suggest that women do not wait long to have another baby if the previous child/children was/were female. Another important finding is that post-secondary educated women seem to delay third births, most probably to wait until the previous children are grown up. Moreover, these women may be exposed to family planning programmes through sources such as peers, courses in college/university, and the media. It is noteworthy that this factor has the strongest influence on birth interval. The finding also indicates that in the past, women preferred to have the third birth earlier than women today. One of the reasons for this may be that contraceptives were neither popular nor easily available in the past and that women had little control over their own reproductive lives.

When we look at the effect of ethnicity across the three intervals (Table 4), although Newar, Mongoloid, and 'other' women waited longer duration for the second and the third child/children compared to their Brahmin and Chhetri peers, these results were not significant suggesting ethnicity mediating

through other social factors. Similarly, religion alone and husband's education alone do not make any difference in shorter or longer first, second, or third birth intervals. Unlike in other Asian countries, religion does not seem to play an important role in determining the length of birth intervals in Nepal.

The effects of women's education and husbands' education on birth intervals shown by the current research contradict some of the findings from the earlier studies done in other parts of Asia (Trussell et al., 1985; Nair, 1996) but support others (Hirschman and Rindfuss, 1980; Rindfuss et al., 1983). The findings imply that encouraging women to join post-secondary schools, to take up business and cottage industry as their occupations may in the long run bring their fertility level down. Similarly, opening up more jobs in 'service' or 'other' occupations rather than in agriculture, business, and daily wages for men (husbands) may be expected to bring down fertility of their wives at some point.

On the contrary to the expectation, the overall results indicate that cash earning (by women) is not an important determinant in shaping the birth intervals in Nepal. However, women in salaried jobs (service), daily wages, business and 'other' occupations seem to delay either the first or the second or the third births (Tables 3 and 4). This contradicting result may have to do something with the measurement of variables and the definitions for the survey. A further work is needed to investigate this finding.

Conclusion

We have found that fertility behaviour of Nepalese women depends on many socio-economic, demographic, and culture-related factors. From the birth history presented here, it is clear that different births are given varied importance in Nepalese society. First births are given much more importance than the subsequent births. Generally speaking, after the first birth, women seem to be eager to complete their reproductive cycle by bearing the second and the third child early, possibly to get involved in other work. However, the analysis of effects of individual factors on different birth intervals shows that women do not always conceive their second and third child/children sooner (with shorter duration of intervals) compared to the first ones and that many factors affect the delaying or the speeding up of the first, the second and the third births.

Although some of the findings contradict the results of previous studies from other developing countries, many support. One of the most significant

findings is that highly educated women seem to have control over their reproductive lives. It is found that fertility decisions also depend on women's place of residence, on their own and their husbands' occupations, and on the age when they first started to have sexual relationship with their spouses. In addition, cultural disparities among different ethnic groups have remarkable influence on birth intervals. Compared to younger ones, older women had longer first and shorter third birth intervals. This may be interpreted as younger women not waiting long for the first baby but delaying the third birth.

The birth intervals affect total fertility rate in that, women who delay child bearing may consequently have low fertility. The findings from this study indicate that as more women achieve higher education in the coming years, fertility of Nepalese women may be expected to decline. Encouraging women for higher education may be the most influential way of slowing down the fertility of Nepalese women.

The findings also suggest that by giving opportunity to women in employments such as business and cottage industries rather than in agriculture-related occupations, Nepal could have higher chance in bringing down its fertility level. Similarly, the steady increase in the number of family planning acceptors also indicates people wanting lesser number of children than in the past. This trend indeed suggests possible further fertility decline of Nepalese women in coming years. Furthermore, the findings that urban women and those women who are young in age delay their third births also suggest that these women's knowledge of family planning on the one hand and the availability and accessibility of contraceptives on the other (a clear indication of an advantage of being in urban areas and having interactions with different media and people as young women) have significant impact on birth intervals. And women with lower age at first union were found to delay their first births. This is an important finding as well. Because if first births are delayed, subsequent births will naturally come later than in the case when first births come earlier. This will certainly affect the total fertility of women.

On the other hand, although it appears that the first-born is considered to be the most important, be it a boy or a girl, a preference for sons is still found to be a strong cultural norm. A pronatalist norm such as this one may enhance fertility of Nepalese women because women may want to continue child bearing until they give birth to a male child. The reasons behind such attitude should be carefully studied and analyzed to find a way to change the attitude without hurting cultural beliefs and practices of different ethnic groups. The

policy planners of the country need to give serious thoughts on the findings such as discussed in this paper before they plan the population policy and development of Nepal.

Notes

1. Value "1" represents the reference group.
2. "Brahmins and Chhetris" are the so-called high caste groups in the Hindu hierarchy. The Newars are the aboriginals of the Kathmandu Valley. "Mongoloid group" consists of the Gurungs, the Magars, the Rais, the Tamangs, and the Sherpas, originally the hills and mountain dwellers.
3. SLC is the School Leaving Certificate level, equivalent to grade 10. Most of the high schools have grade 10 levels in Nepal.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TOWNS FOR RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN NEPAL – TWO CASE STUDIES FROM WESTERN NEPAL

Martin Raithelhuber

Nepal is often described as a country with a largely rural population working in agriculture. This is only a part of the truth. Subsistence agriculture does no longer – and in some regions never has – guarantee livelihood security for most rural households. The Nepal Living Standards Survey, performed by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), shows that only 65% of the incomes of an average rural household comes from farming whereas 35% stems from other income sources (CBS 1997:10). In the study area, over 60% of the households has less than 1 ha land (CBS 1993a, 1993b). Thus, most of them need other sources of income to survive. How do rural people make a living, then? How do households cope with a situation when an increasing numbers of people have to share the same resources? The growing number of towns indicates that part of the answer may be found in studying urbanization and rural-urban interaction.

Urbanization and national planning

Urbanization is a relatively new phenomenon in Nepal. About 50 years ago, there were few towns outside the Kathmandu valley. Now, about 15% of the population lives in 58 towns (CBS 2001), and the number of towns as well as the urban population is increasing steadily. The urbanization process in Nepal is characterized by a rapid growth of small and medium-sized urban centres, most of which are situated in the Terai flatland in the south of the country along the East-West Highway. Some of these towns like Butwal and Bharatpur in the Terai flatland almost doubled their population in the last decade.

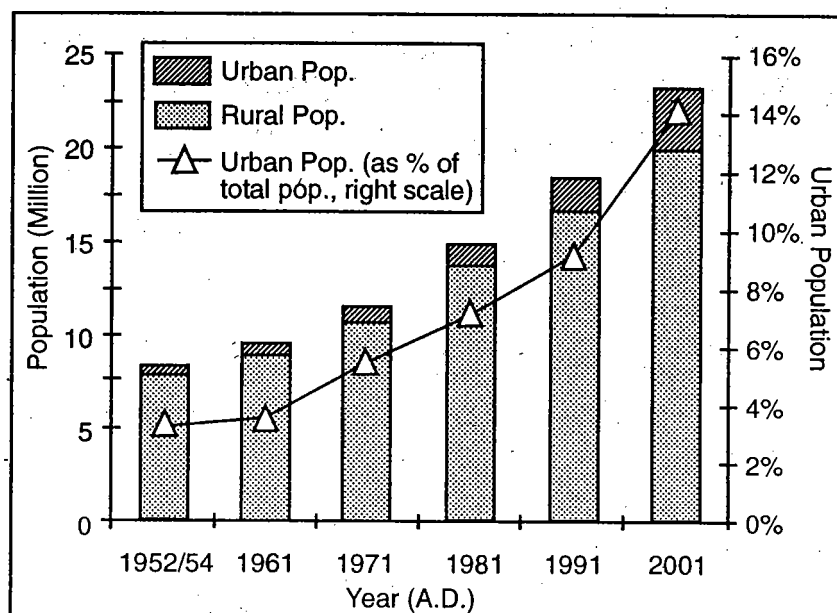


Figure 1: Urban growth in Nepal 1952/54 to 2001. Source: CBS 2001

Urbanization is not just the evolvement and growth of towns. Urbanization implies social and economic change in both towns and villages, which often leads to widening disparities between urban and rural areas. The selected living standard indicators given in Chart 1 illustrate some aspects of these appalling disparities.

Chart 1: Rural-Urban Disparities in Living Standards
(selected indicators)

	Av. annual per capita income (Rs)	Mean time to reach nearest health post	Literacy male/female (%)
Urban	16,118	21 min	77.3 / 50.5
Rural	7,075	1 h 17 min	50.1 / 22.4

Source: CBS 1996.

While there are some studies about rural-urban migration trends (e.g. Sharma 1989 and KC 1998), it is much less evident what urbanization means for the majority of the population, i.e. those who stay back in the villages. ~~Does the~~ evolvement of new urban centres offer them new opportunities to

lead a better life? Does urbanization make them more vulnerable to existing risks or bring even new risks? Which households can benefit from urbanization, which are not affected, and which households lose out?

Rural-urban Interaction

The 9th 5-Year Plan acknowledges that the increasing imbalances between rural and urban areas caused by urbanization (National Planning Commission 1998, p. 262). However, the way national level planning deals with rural-urban interaction and the role of towns for regional development is rather one-sided, and biased towards physical infrastructure development. The National Planning Commission proposes to increase the "inter-relationship" between rural and urban areas to fight poverty by physical development of market areas and the construction of rural roads (*ibid.*). Yet, this opens up some important questions:

Which products are rural people expected to sell on these markets, in view of the fact that a majority of rural households cannot even produce enough food for their own needs?

Who is going to manage these markets to secure access for rural people and to guarantee fair terms of trade?

How do existing markets work? In what way would new market infrastructure affect these markets? How can the existing formal and informal weekly markets be integrated into development programmes? and lastly,

How can we make sure that further market integration of rural households will be beneficial for them?

In order to gain empirical evidence for the questions raised above, the author has carried out a survey in two villages in Palpa and Rupandehi Districts, in 1998/99 (see Figure 2). The first phase of the research, based on PRA-tools, was followed by a stratified random sample questionnaire survey. About 40 households, 30% of all households in each village, were surveyed.

The main hypothesis of this research is that an intensifying interaction between rural areas and regional urban centres is part of the explanation why most people remain living in their villages – although under increasingly difficult circumstances. The assumption is that the emergence of regional urban centres, especially along the East-West Highway in the Terai, provides new opportunities but also new risks for rural households in the hinterland.

Some households may be better equipped and faster to adapt to the new situation than others may. There will be winners and losers among rural households in the process.

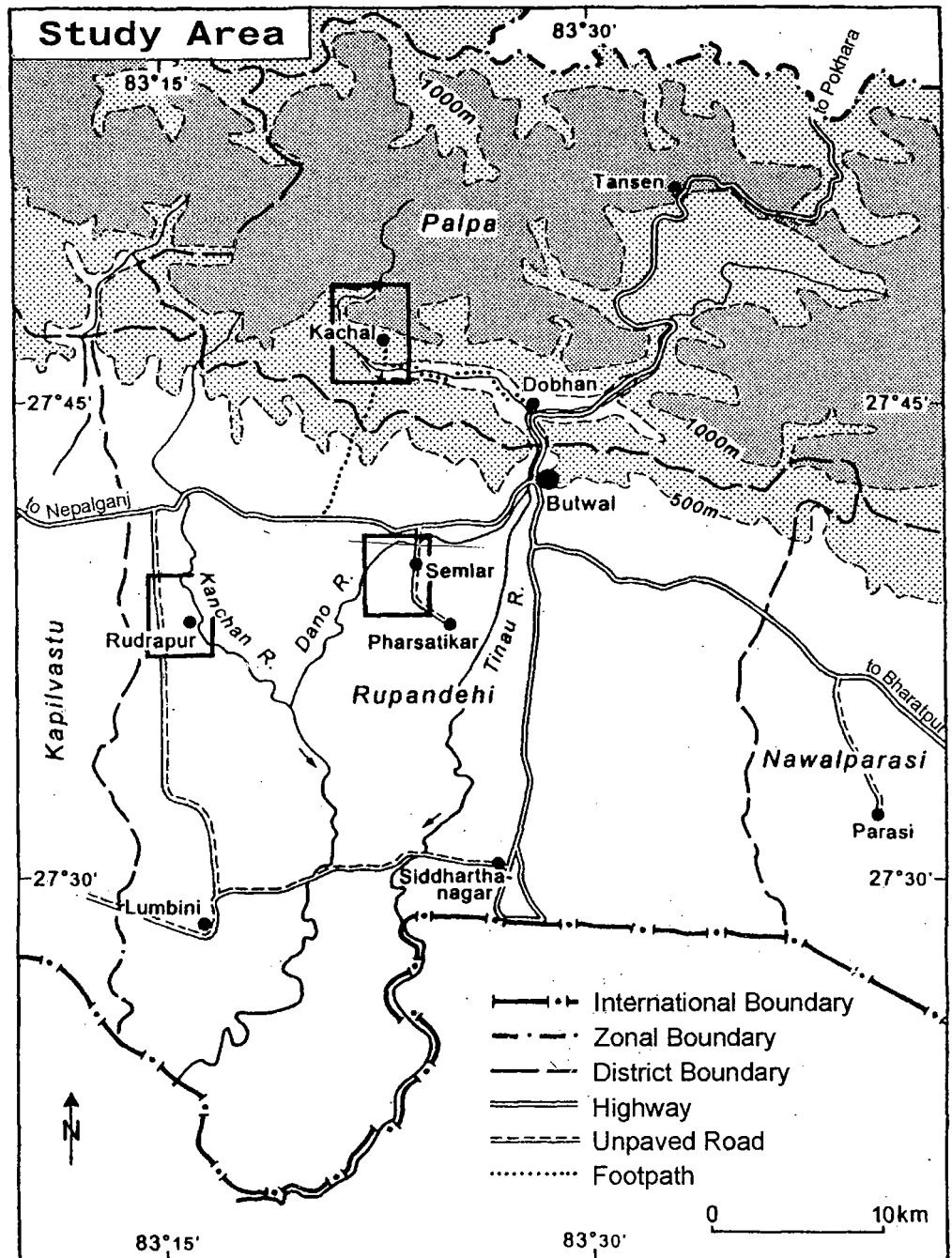


Figure 2: Map of the study area. Draft: M. Raithelhuber. Cartography: H. Nischk.

"Real markets" and "institutions"

In this paper, the market-related income strategies of rural households in two villages, one hill village and one peri-urban Terai village, are discussed using the concept of "real markets" (cf. Mackintosh 1990). This concept has been modified with elements of institutional theory (cf. North 1990, 1995, and Leach, Mearns et al. 1997). As the rural subsistence economy can provide less and less livelihood security for rural households, market participation is of increasing importance for the rural population in Nepal. Thus, the increasing importance of markets asks for a more elaborate analysis of the term. Mackintosh (1990) distinguishes three different meanings of market.

Firstly, market stands for the "private sector", or "any process of exchange, undertaken by independent actors (people or institutions), of goods, services, labour power and money" (ibid:46). The second meaning is that of abstract market models. They often imply assumptions like perfect competition or see markets as costless and free. Some models include questions of access, entitlements, and limited information (e.g. Sen 1981). The third meaning is based on such market abstractions but deals with markets "as they operate in the world" (Mackintosh 1990:47). Such "real markets" are seen as structured sets of social relations. Studies on "real markets" deal with the institutional context of all kinds of buying and selling. "Real market" models try to include "questions of entitlement, power and class, of inequality, accumulation and exploitation, of market-makers and market-victims into abstract market models" (Bohle 1992:129)

The key elements of the modified "real markets" concept are institutions and actors. From an institutionalist point of view, institutions are much more than just the "context" of business transactions as Mackintosh describes them. This shall be explained in more detail. According to North (North 1995:23), "institutions are the rules of the game of a society, or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction." Some institutions have a high degree of formalization. They are codified as formal laws and sanctioned by the government. Other institutions are informal, regularized patterns of behaviour, e.g. friendship or neighbourhood labour exchange systems in a village. They are sanctioned informally. One can lose his or her reputation or trustworthiness and thus be (temporarily) excluded from certain institutions (e.g. informal credits or mutual help).

Many institutions simultaneously have formal and informal aspects. Actually, even in highly complex and formalised societies many activities like

business transactions involve both formal and informal institutions. The transfer of property rights regulated by formal institutions is just a small part of the transaction. The terms of the contract (discount, payment options) and the transaction itself (who is doing business with whom?) will be influenced by other factors such as the information the business partners have, e.g. about the reliability of payment and delivery, whether the quality of the goods is guaranteed or not, etc. All this is not just a question of individual business behaviour but also a reflection of the "habits" or "customs" in business life, i.e. of informal institutions. Prices, for example, are influenced not only by supply and demand but also by the anticipation of the probable behaviour of the transaction partners (whether he/she is under pressure to sell, at which point will he/she leave without selling, how he/she is going to use the purchased item, etc.).

How do institutions come into existence? According to Leach, Mearns et al. (1997), it is "regularized practices, performed over time, which come to constitute institutions". However, "as they consciously monitor the consequences of past behaviour and the actions of others, different social actors may choose – or be forced – to act in irregular ways. Over time (...) institutional change may occur." Thus, institutions are actively produced and reproduced in a society. Consequently, their functioning reflects the power relationships in that society and helps to maintain these relationships at the same time: "Institutions are not necessarily or even usually created to be socially efficient; rather they (...) are created to serve the interests of those with the bargaining power to create new rules" (North 1995:20).

Setting focus only on formal institutions will not show the whole picture in a country like Nepal. Here, formal institutions often do not reflect people's practises, and government authorities often do not enforce official sanctions. For a still largely illiterate rural society, informal institutions based on habit, tradition, culture, personal relationships etc. can be much more important for their daily activities than formal institutions. This is even true for activities like marketing, for which formal institutions exist.

In order to better understand "real markets" of real people with real needs we have to find out:

Which institutions regulate access to markets and market transactions?

Who can influence these institutions?

What is the power relationship of the different actors, e.g. who has control over information and the terms of transactions?

How could the institutional arrangements governing markets be influenced in such a way that especially vulnerable rural households can participate under better conditions, and who could do that?

Cottage Industries and Marketing in the Hill Village of Kachal

Kachal is a hill village some 17 km northwest of Butwal municipality (see Figure 2). The village is only accessible by a four to five hours walk from the Butwal-Pokhara highway, which involves crossing the Dobhan River twelve times without bridges. The population is mostly Magar with some households of Brahmin, Chetri and Occupational castes.

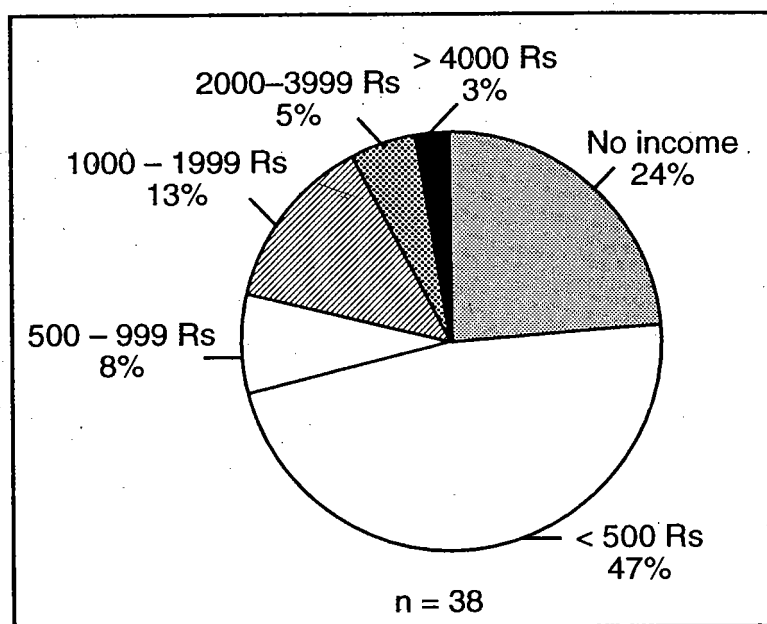


Figure 3: Yearly income of households in Kachal from marketing cottage products.
Source: Own survey, 1999.

Most households in Kachal do not produce enough grain to meet their own consumption needs. About 63% of the households in the village have grain from their own production for less than ten months (food self-sufficiency <10 months), and still 47% of all households have grain for less than seven months a year. As there is not enough grain produced in the village, most households depend on urban grain markets in Dobhan and Butwal. These households need additional income opportunities, which are locally available, for their survival, as remittances from seasonal labour migrants are sporadic and

unreliable. In other words, many households need an opportunity for cash income that is ready at hand when the need for food arises. Producing one or several cottage products is a strategy adopted by 76% of the households in Kachal for this purpose (see Figure 3).

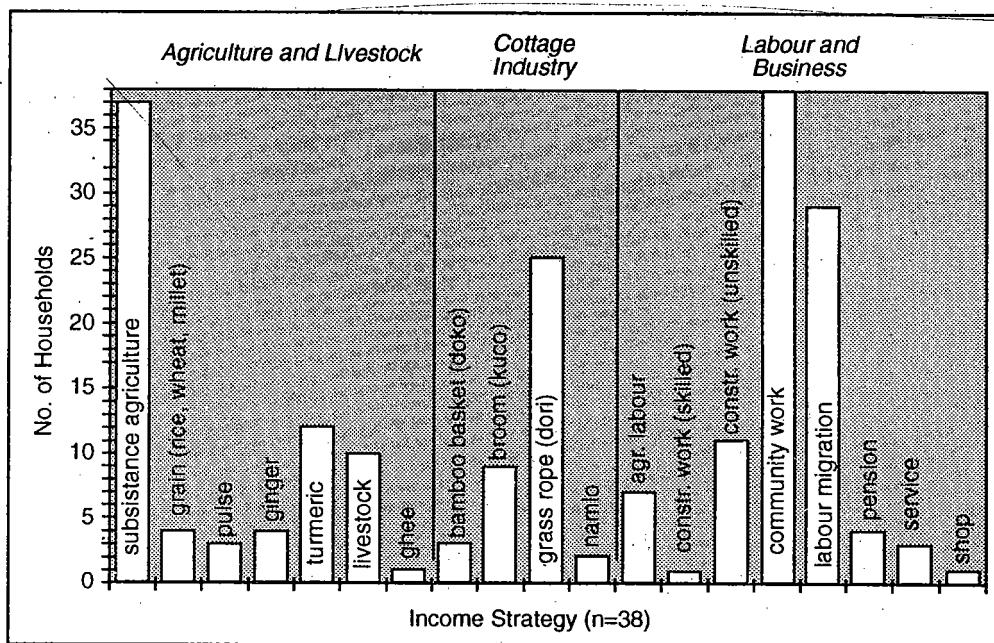


Figure 4: Market-related income strategies of households in Kachal (multiple responses were possible). Source: Own survey, 1999.

People from Kachal village come to Dobhan regularly in order to sell cottage products such as grass ropes (*dori*), bamboo baskets (*doko*), brooms (*kuco*), and strings for carrying loads (*namlo*). Dobhan is a roadside bazar village situated about 5 km north of Butwal at the highway from Butwal to Pokhara. The market at Dobhan is an informal market; there are no organizers, no fees, and there is no control of quality or prices. Everyone can come to buy and sell. However, there is a set of institutionalised rules, which regulate the market.

The market activities in Dobhan start in the early morning several hours before the bi-weekly market in nearby Butwal. On market days, there are between one and four wholesalers in Dobhan, depending on time and season. Most of them have a storeroom in Butwal and sell most of their goods on Butwal's weekly market immediately after they leave Dobhan. Transportation of goods is done using public jeeps and buses. Whereas most of the

wholesalers concentrate on cottage products, one of them buys the whole range of rural products including ginger, pre-dried turmeric, and pulses. Thus, he is the preferred business partner for people from Kachal who often bring small amounts of different items.

The prices offered by the wholesalers change frequently, sometimes even within minutes. In the early morning, when all wholesalers are already there but few villagers have arrived, prices for the villagers tend to be medium to high. During that time, the villagers have several options:

- They can wait and see how prices develop in Dobhan.

- They can go to Butwal and sell their produce there to wholesalers waiting at several small informal market locations outside the official market area.

- They can sell at Butwal's weekly market directly to customer.

When more and more villagers arrive, prices start to fall. Those wholesalers leave who have filled up their stock. Prices reach the lowest level when only one wholesaler is left and villagers still continue to arrive with new goods. The price for a bundle of rope, for example, can fall from Rs 5 to only Rs. 2.5 then. Both, the amount of goods the wholesalers plan to buy and the amount and types of goods brought by the villagers during the morning are impossible to predict. Thus, it is highly unpredictable which price the villagers will get for a certain product. As there are no storage facilities in Dobhan, people from Kachal are forced to sell their products at whatever price they get. Carrying the goods back to the village plus an additional load of grain would be difficult. Besides, they might not have the cash to buy grain without first selling off their goods.

Dobhan is a weekly market where informal institutions and unequal distribution of power play a major role. The informal character of the market has positive and negative effects. One of the positive effects is free access for all. There are no fees or regulations whereas at the weekly market in Butwal vendors have to pay an entry fee of Rs 10 to the municipality, which manages the market. This regulation prevents many small farmers from entering the market because often they have just small amounts of goods worth around Rs. 100 to sell. Dobhan is one of many informal "pre" markets in and around Butwal, which help farmers to save the market fee and the costs of a bus trip. On the other hand, they cannot profit from the competitive atmosphere at the large weekly market in Butwal.

In Dobhan, two types of market actors can be identified: urban based wholesalers (about four) and small rural cottage producers with a farming background (several hundred men and women). The villagers come down from their homes, located at several hours walking distance, with small amounts of cottage and / or agricultural products. They have to sell off all of their goods. The price they get depends very much on the time when they enter the market. As supply is mostly much higher than demand, they cannot influence prices very much. They are not organized and do not coordinate their bargaining even if they come from the same village. There is no storage facility available in Dobhan nor is there a price information system, which could inform about prices in Butwal or in other places. As Kachal is affected by a strong male labour migration, women who are often illiterate do most sales. Many women reported that they do not feel to be in a position to bargain for better prices with the male, literate and eloquent wholesalers. Thus, market institutions also have a gender dimension. The farmers enter the market in a position of weakness. They are forced to sell at a certain time for a price they cannot influence. They cannot foresee the behaviour of the wholesalers and other villagers, and often they lack the information, confidence and skills to confront the wholesalers with demands for higher prices.

The wholesalers, on the other hand, mostly get the amount of goods they want to acquire. For them, the problem is unreliability of quality and – to a minor extend – of supply. Although they have some storage facility in Butwal, they try to keep stocks low, as retail prices for cottage products are relatively stable. Just one of the wholesalers sells to a bigger wholesaler once in a while or does some processing of turmeric, whereas most of them retail the products bought in Dobhan at various urban weekly markets in the region. Wholesalers are the “market makers” of the local market for cottage products. They make the prices and decide disputes over quality, as there is no neutral quality control or standardization. Still, they could profit from supply that is more reliable and a better quality control.

Vegetable Production and Marketing in the Terai Village of Semlar

Semlar is a multi-ethnic village located in the Terai flatland just 8 km southwest of Butwal Municipality (see Figure 2). Due to the connection to the highway by an all-weather road, there is regular public transport to Butwal and other towns. In addition, many people use bicycles as means of transport.

Among the population, there are autochthonous Tharu, hill caste groups like Brahmin and Chetri, and other Terai groups like Murau and Yadav. About 39% of all households in the village have a food sufficiency of six months or less. The degree of food self-sufficiency varies widely among the households of the village. Roughly, one third of the households produces grain surpluses, one third has a high food self-sufficiency of 10 to 12 months, and the last third has a low food self-sufficiency, with a majority of the households having no agricultural production at all.

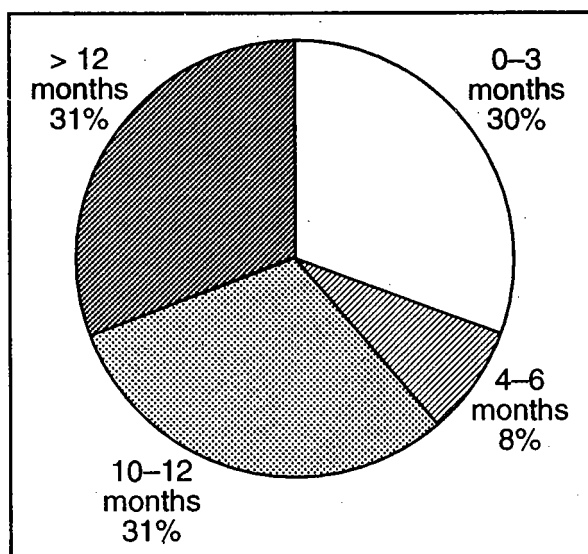


Figure 5: Intra-village disparities of food self-sufficiency in Semlar.
Source: Own survey, 1999.

The houses of the Murau are all lined up along a side road in the lower part of the village. They migrated into the area from the Nepal-Indian border area about 30 years ago, dug wells in their fields and started an intensive irrigated cropping system with one paddy crop in summer and vegetables during the rest of the year. During the dry season, the striking difference between their fields and those of other villagers is clearly visible: in the fields of the Murau people are busy weeding and irrigating all kinds of vegetables whereas the adjacent fields of their neighbours are left fallow.

Unlike grain farming, which is characterized by a labour-intensive summer season and a slack season in winter, the paddy-vegetable cropping pattern adopted by the Murau farmers is labour-intensive throughout the year. Consequently, all members of Murau households are engaged in full-time

farming. Whereas seasonal labour migration and wage labour are a common income strategy of many households in Semlar, they do not exist among Murau households. The most important factor for their vegetable production is the availability of workforce in a household. The more persons work in the fields, the higher is the total production (see Fig. 4). Other factors like the size of a household's land holding have a minor influence on the amount of a household's vegetable production. The vegetables are sold in Butwal and at other weekly markets in the area. The income from vegetable marketing reaches considerable heights. In the sample, the maximum figure for one household was over Rs. 60,000 per year. Thus, vegetable production in Semlar is a big business compared to cottage production in Kachal.

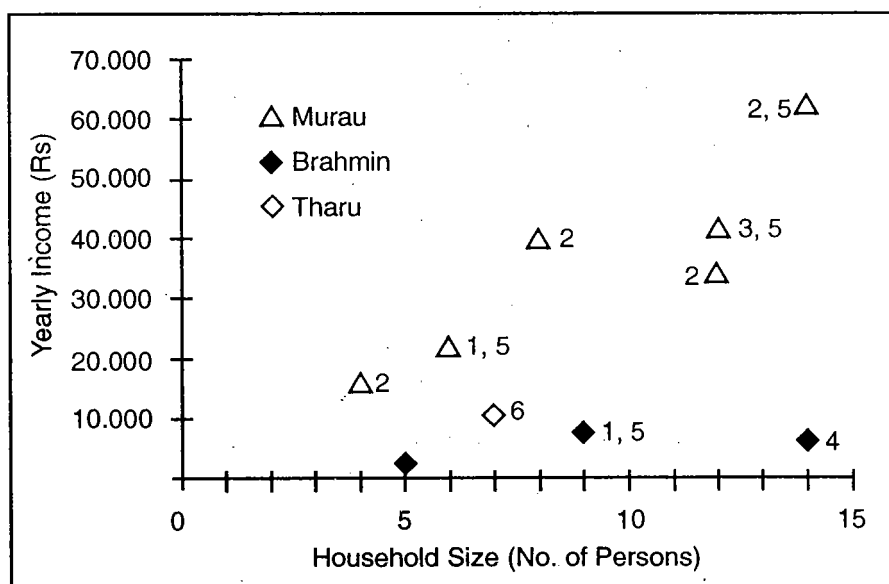


Figure 6: Yearly household income from vegetable production in Semlar. The numbers refer to size of landholding in bigha (1 bigha = ca. 0.7 ha). Source: Own survey, 1999.

Yet, there are also problems. Similar to the case study discussed above, the main obstacles lie in the field of marketing. The Murau farmers have no storage facilities for vegetables nor are such a facilities available in Butwal. Thus, whenever a crop is ripe, the harvested produce has to be sold immediately. Vegetable prices, therefore, go down significantly during the peak season. Mostly, farmers transport the vegetables on bicycles. The vegetables are packed in bags or large wooden boxes. As there is no special packing for those vegetables like tomatoes, which are sensitive to shock, to

protect them during transport, a certain percentage of the vegetables is always damaged. While almost all farmers from Kachal sell to wholesalers, the vegetable farmers from Semlar do most of the retailing by themselves. The disadvantage of that strategy is that during the vegetable season one adult family member has to do the time-consuming marketing and is not available for farm work. The Murau possess and use skills other households in Semlar possess as well. Building dug-wells and growing vegetable in a kitchen garden for home consumption are widespread in the region. The differences consist in the way in which the Murau households make use of these skills and how they organize their livelihood strategy around them. Non-Murau households in Semlar organize their livelihood strategies around a labour-intensive transplanting and harvesting time in summer. During the long slack season in winter, they engage in seasonal migration and wage labour. Murau households on the other hand use their labour resources on their own land throughout the year.

The Murau farmers reported not to know about modern production techniques such as improved seeds. They do no grading or sorting of vegetables, as this is not necessary for retailing at weekly markets. However, one of the reasons for the high percentage of Indian vegetables (75%) traded at Butwal's weekly market is the difficulty in getting larger amounts of graded, sorted Nepalese vegetables at specific times (Market Access for Rural Development 1998; 1999). Weekly markets are no guarantee for full transparency of prices. An attempt to introduce a price information system in some villages in Rupandehi to give vegetable farmers a better bargaining position against wholesalers have failed for lack of support by the farmers and the, in some cases even violent, opposition of some wholesalers. These are some of the reasons why the farmers from Semlar have little access to the wholesale market at favourable terms with their current production and marketing strategies.

Discussions with villagers revealed that there is more behind these differences in economic behaviour than just a different cropping pattern. Remarks from non-Murau participants like "They [the Murau] can work all day on their fields, even during noon. We [hill people] couldn't do that" or "It is not our [the hill people and Tharus] tradition to grow vegetables" try to link ethnic categories and regional origin with specific income strategies. Interestingly, the arguments brought forward by the discussion participants hold true only in the local context. A few kilometres north of the village, in

the adjacent hills, commercial vegetable production is widespread among hill people living close to the highway. Caste, therefore, should not be taken as a reason for a specific livelihood pattern. In an institution-theoretical perspective, caste is an institution, and as such produced and reproduced by actors in society. Caste is the outcome of local livelihood patterns as well as it serves as an orientation for households to help them decide upon their own, specific livelihood pattern. Institutional change is well reflected in the patterns of some households, which adopt strategies new to their "traditional" caste background, like Tharu households producing and marketing vegetables or Brahmin households rising poultry. Still, the influences of localised institutions on household level decision to include a specific income strategy into its livelihood strategy or to exclude it are strong – an aspect often forgotten in development schemes promoting commercial agriculture.

Vegetable farmers in Semlar benefit from a growing urban demand for vegetables but being producers and retailers at the same time, they face the double risk of harvest losses and price variations. The prices they get for their vegetables are influenced not only by seasonal variations but also by extra-regional factors like vegetable imports from India. An additional difficulty is that Murau farmers who belong to a non-Nepali speaking group which is considered "Indian" by mainstream society have problems in accessing the existing government resources like agricultural extension programmes. "Indian" in this respect does not refer to India as a country but to the ongoing discussion about the social and legal status of many ethnic groups living in the Nepal-Indian borderland. Murau vegetable farmers are not "market victims". However, the current institutional setting for vegetable production and marketing does not allow them to fully take advantage of the opportunities offered by vegetable farming.

Consequences for Regional Development in Nepal

The "typical" Nepalese farming household living mainly from subsistence agriculture does no longer exist. Rural households in the Nepal of today employ a complex combination of livelihood strategies. Interaction with urban goods and labour markets forms a part of most rural livelihood patterns. Cottage production is an income strategy adopted by the majority of households in Kachal as an opportunity to earn cash money in the agricultural slack season, when other income opportunities are scarce. As an additional income source, cottage production strengthens the livelihood security of rural

households. This is especially true for households with a low food sufficiency and, consequently, a high risk of food insecurity. However, there is a strong difference in the spatial organisation of goods and labour markets. While weekly markets and urban market centres in the region play an important role for the marketing of rural products, looking for a job still implies seasonal long-distance migration to India.

Evidence from the case study Semlar shows that livelihood strategies which include commercial vegetable production and grain production for own consumption can be the source of considerable cash income, ease the need for labour migration and provide a high degree of food security. Labour-intensive commercial vegetable production, however, does not fit into the livelihood pattern of many rural households, as they try to meet their need for cash income with wage labour and labour migration. Often, local labour arrangements offer access to loans or wage advances, which adds to their attractiveness but causes dependency and inflexibility at the same time. Introducing vegetable production into a household's livelihood pattern implies to change its complex combination of livelihood strategies. This is not an easy process as the allocation of labour in time and space has to be changed, thoroughly.

On the one hand, the study shows that the lack of physical infrastructure such as roads and telephone lines does not prevent rural households from adopting rural-urban marketing of products as a livelihood strategy. The existence of physical infrastructure, on the other hand, does not automatically imply that more rural households engage in rural-urban income strategies. Other factors such as institutionalised livelihood patterns (in the case of the Murau vegetable farmers) and time-space allocation pattern of workforce have a more significant influence. The analysis of the rural-urban marketing strategies of rural households indicates that the institutional framework of this interaction is inadequate. The existing institutions limit market access for rural people and are responsible for the uneven distribution of risks to the disadvantage of rural people.

One of the main tasks for regional planning in Nepal is to identify and bring together the regional actors such as districts, municipalities, VDCs, business organizations, NGOs, development programmes, etc. in a region in order to set up a regional level institutional framework for rural-urban interaction. Such an institutional framework has to guarantee easy access to urban markets for rural people on fair terms and to find ways to reduce the

risk for rural households involved in marketing in order to allow them more intense market participation. Institutional development of marketing channels like establishing trading relationships, providing price information, improving access to formal weekly markets, and strengthening the marketing skills of rural people could improve the situation considerably. The Rural-Urban Partnership Programme (RUPP) is already working in field of institutional development of rural-urban linkages. The programme promotes urban-based rural development and works from within the municipalities, covering the municipality area and adjoining VDCs. Thus, the municipalities are expected to become rural-urban actors. This may be a first step towards developing an institutional framework on the regional level.

The prevalence of a high percentage of long-distance labour migration and the marketing problems mentioned above indicate that most rural households are not in a position to benefit from the growth of urban centres in Nepal even if they live relatively close to these towns. Only very few well-to-do households in the village seem to fully profit from the new job, business and education opportunities provided in towns e.g. by giving their children a good, "urban" education and thus, step by step, moving capital and residence to town. The ongoing uprising of the Maoist guerrilla may be an indicator for the urgent need to strengthen the livelihood security of rural households by promoting a fair, efficient and sustainable rural-urban institutional framework for rural-urban interaction in order to give rural households a better chance to benefit from urbanization.

Notes

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A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE OF WOMEN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN NEPAL

Gyanu Chhetri

Introduction

Women were involved in development activities and programmes (perhaps even before Mexico Conference, the International Women's Year of 1975 or the Decade for Women, 1975-1985), they are and will continue to do so as long as they have their given responsibilities to fulfil. The idea of increasing women's participation that we hear so often from agencies, policy makers or planners sounds more like just another rhetoric associated with today's concept of development. Mies (1990) noted that even after the International Decade for Women, the integration of women into development had not solved women's survival problems. She argued that it only increased women's workload but did not give them more income and assets. I believe that part of the problem in the past may have been a misconception among the planners and policy makers as to what constitutes women's participation. This may be the reason why many (e.g., NGOs/INGOs in Nepal at least) talked about increasing women's participation, without knowing in what and how and what made it easy or difficult to do as a task out in the field.

This paper aims at discussing constraints of women's participation in forest management activities in the context of social, cultural and economic realities of Nepali society. It is found that without support and motivation from the male members of the community, increasing women's participation in development activities is not only difficult but also almost impossible. On the basis of empirical findings, the paper also suggests some practical strategies to eliminate those constraints.

Data /information used here were collected as a part of a gender analysis study (Chhetri and Rana 1994) carried out in two districts – Sindhu Palchok and Kavre Palanchok – in the mid-hills of Central Nepal. Six Forest User

Groups (FUGs) in four sites were selected purposively on the basis of natural and planted type of forests as "Community Forests" (CF), gender and caste/ethnic composition of users and their committees. Fieldwork was carried out in 1994. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, group discussion, observation, informal and personal discussions, and review of Operational Plans and Minute Books of the FUGs under study.

Background Arguments

Women have been taking part in development activities in Nepal, long before international concerns were voiced for including women in development and increasing their participation. In Nepali socio-economic context, women's workload is believed to be heavier in the rural areas of the country compared to that of their men. However, their contribution to development activities at community level and work at household level is never recognized and their status remained unimproved in spite of global efforts in increasing women's participation. There are constraints of women's participation in Nepali society at various levels which can be eliminated or overcome mainly by awareness generating and training at massive scale for both men and women because neither of the two gender exist in isolation.

If women were sending their men to participate in the meetings and gatherings, they may have good reasons for the same. Why they do not want to or can not participate in village meetings in stead of or along with their men? Without knowing this, arguing about involving or nominating of women into committees without their knowledge or consent, just because a project or program has a mandate to involve women or ensure their participation, is not going to solve the problem or make things better for women. The practices in relation to this issue which can be observed at the field level in different parts of the country raises some questions such as: Whose requirement is this? Is it of the State, planners, policy makers, donor agencies, or community and villages? If women's participation is deemed essential in planning, implementing and decision making, why are they left out? Where do they belong in the process of development? How long they will have to represent only in the papers or just get nominated by others who think their participation is necessary? Questions such as these have intrigued many of us. This paper will attempt to address some of these questions on the basis of empirical findings from selected Community Forest Users Groups.

There is no readymade solution to increase women's participation in forestry or community and rural development. As it is said, necessity is the mother of invention, women's needs and problems could only motivate them for participation in any development interventions. Therefore, they themselves and others as well will have to identify their needs or interest to begin with. They should seek and also be given opportunities to speak about their problems, listened to and properly motivated by the local people and the elite. So long as men decide what the needs, problems, interests and priorities of their women are (and unfortunately, this is the prevailing practice in most of the situations from the level of households to the national and international arena), the idea of enhancing women's participation in development will only remain a rhetoric.

Women and Forestry in Nepal – A Review

Nepal's commitment at the UN, as it appears to Bhadra (1995), created a felt need towards including a woman's component into the packages or programs on development in the country. It has generated a strong interest and concern for issues and problems of women in the country and aroused interests at various levels among nation states, development agencies and organizations towards gender issues. Women in many societies of the world today are recognized as a disadvantaged group deserving special attention. In Nepal, many programs and organizations have added women's sections or components to their regular activities in response to the global advocacy for including women in development.

The Status of Women project (1979) carried by the Center for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA) and supported by USAID, was the first extensive application of WID concept in Nepal. The project is also believed to be the first to "set an agenda for the understanding of Nepali women, and for practical development interventions in their favour" (Upadhyaya 1996:424). Recommendations of the Status of Women Studies and International and national concerns for women's issues were considered as instrumental in creating a separate chapter on WID policy in the sixth five year plan of Nepal (Bhadra 1995).

Forestry programs have followed the general pattern along with other development programs of adding women's components. Forestry programs and other development programs with forestry components in Nepal have experimented with various methods of involving local people in forestry development activities. Since "people" has now included women as well (it

appears that not long ago peoples participation" meant "men's participation"!), most such programs seek women's participation (see R. Chhetri 1999 for a critique of the practice of participation in Nepal). However, we have yet to see a strategy good enough to increase involvement of women in forestry development activities.

Since women are the primary users of forest products, it would be logical that they be given responsibilities for its conservation also. Any activity relating to access and/or improvement in the condition of forest resources will invariably have a bearing on women as its users. Women and forestry appear to have a closer link in the rural areas of Nepal where life is shaped and dictated by availability and access to basic resources such as water, fuel and fodder. The villages in general and their women in particular have used and managed forests from the past. Their participation, therefore, becomes critical for the success of forestry programs.

Siddiqi argued in favor of the idea of "women for forestry" in response to the question, "women for forestry or forestry for women"? She wrote, "women's participation will help forestry first and women second. Women will have to give to forestry their interest, time, effort and even money (in some cases) before forestry gives them products for household consumption and commercial use, income and consequent improvement in position, status and decision-making power" (1989:4). I would consider it more appropriate to argue that it is neither women for forestry, nor forestry for women, but Women and Forestry. Because our concern should not be who gives who first, rather who is perceived how in relation to each other. How women perceive the role of forestry for their lives? What knowledge do they possess about forestry? How forestry can benefit from women? In short, it is the interactive dimension between women and forestry that is crucial.

In this paper, gender differences are assessed in terms of the participation in forestry and forest-related activities and decision making at the community level. Despite all the slogans and efforts of bilateral and multi-lateral donors, projects of the government agencies, NGOs and INGOs, not much seems to have been achieved in terms of achieving women's genuine participation or involvement in rural development and forestry in Nepal. Why are women still invisible? What are the constraints of women's participation and what are the possible ways to overcome them? These questions have guided the present study. Some illustrations from the field level will be used to support the emerging arguments in the subject.

Social, Cultural and Economic Realities: Some Observations from Nepali Society

In order to understand the given role of people or the way they act, one has to understand the structure of the society, and the prevalent norms and values which guide them in every day activities.

Socio-cultural Norms and Values

In Nepali society, each and every individual has different sets of roles to perform on the basis of their age, sex, position within the family and status as well as the caste/ethnic group they belong to in some cases. Traditional high-caste Hindu ideals have dictated women's manners and behaviours (See Bennett 1983, Gray 1990, Kondos 1990). Men are accorded higher status and importance in the society (Shrestha 1999). As such high-caste Hindu women are put under constant control of their men in different forms at different stages of life. Age and status in the family also determines the nature and degree of women's involvement in household work and decision-making (Shrestha 1994 and 1999, Bhatt et al. 1997). Women are believed to have their primary responsibilities in domestic chores, farm activities, collection and utilization of forest products, rearing and taking care of children, as well as looking after the livestock (see Thacker 1993; Gurung and Banskota 1993; Pandey 1990, Bhatt et.al.1997). Not only the work sphere, but also the manners, body language, dressing pattern, etc., are defined culturally and women in Nepali society are expected to behave womanly (how this is to be defined is a contested issue in itself).

Caste affiliation seems to have some influence on the role and status of women. For instance, among the lower caste people, economic imperative seems to put women next to their men (in the absence of economic disparity) in power status and for their contribution in maintaining family economy. A survey by women of Nauhatta Block (Bihar, India) revealed that, "among depressed castes, earning women members in households evoke respect" (Mahila Bikas Sangh, 1988:43). Whether this could apply to the Nepali context is a research issue in itself.

Dichotomized Sphere of Economic Activities

Men and women seem to have culturally and biologically defined sphere of activities in Nepal. For some reason, the work and responsibility outside the house or "Bahira-fera" and farm production is often considered as a male role

(e.g., attending public meetings or gatherings where decisions are to be made). In contrast, women's work domain is considered inside work or "Bhitra-fera" although fetching water, fuel and fodder falls within their responsibility. Outside work, which requires public contact is taken up by men and inside work, is carried out by women. In other words, men carry out community work whereas women are involved in productive and reproductive works in the households. Activities such as ploughing, fixing roof, animal slaughtering and felling/splitting huge trees are performed exclusively by men. Whereas women's responsibility is stretched from domestic chores to farm and forest. A World Bank paper recognizes that women in most underdeveloped countries are responsible for managing fuel, water, food and sanitation (Herz 1988). However, a study on intra-household gender analysis of work roles and resource distribution in a Nepali village, (Bhadra, 1997) revealed that, women perceived men as "providers" and themselves as "nurturers" even though they spent more time than their men in productive activities. Besides, women were found to be involved in income generating activities only when men's income was not sufficient to support the family. Reality also testifies that, women's entrance into job market is associated with supporting family from men's and or other household earnings.

Nepali women have already been participating in development activities and they have performed important social and economic roles in the society. However, what they have done and what their potentials are (and what they are) has not been acknowledged or recognized. Given the above conditions, what is the justification of the calls for "enhancing women's participation" in forestry activities? Are we not "refusing" to see what is already there? An important option to this is to recognize what exists. There may be gaps, weaknesses, etc., which may be corrected. What already exists may need to be strengthened. This of course, is not to suggest that there are no constraints for women to participate in public affairs as easily as their men. There are problems and let us now talk about some of those.

Constraints of Women's Participation: Field Realities

Women are constrained by various factors to participate in forestry or development activities. The case studies (See Chhetri and Rana 1994 for details) revealed that women generally do not appear in the meetings/gatherings because they have heavier workload; are normally not

invited; do not have a say in decision making because of their lower representation; are scared of being teased by fellow villagers (people hold such discouraging behavior or negative attitude towards women's participation); and are not expected to attend formal meetings. Let me elaborate on some of these in order to give a clearer picture of the realities.

Persistent Heavier Workload of Women In Spite of Developments

Although men and women in Nepali village have culturally defined sphere of activities, the village women have heavier workload compared to their men (Acharya et. al. 1981, ILO 1986, Mahila Bikas Sangh 1988, Pandey 1990, Gurung & Banskota 1993, Chhetri and Rana 1994, SDC 1995, Shtri Shakti 1995, Bhadra 1997). The work burden of women in Nepal is reported to be much higher than the global average for women (NESAC 1998). Women's work domain in rural Nepal is such a field that there is no salary or tips or holiday or overtime payment or any reward. Their work days are often long beginning early in the morning and closing late at night. Women in so called developed western societies stretch their weekends often by watching late night movies. But women in Nepali village wake up every morning with mouths to feed regardless of the days of the week or months of the year (see Chhetri and Rana 1994 for a summary of activities for an average day of women in the village).

During the months of Asar and Saun (mid-June to mid-August) work schedule is hectic due to plantation activity. Women get up soon after midnight, and prepare meal and khaja (snacks) before dawn. They carry the meal and khaja to the field. The hali (ploughman) should be fed with rice before other workers arrive. In the field, women harvest corn, remove corn stalks for rice plantation. They not only work all day doing plantation, they also carry corn back home finding their way to home in twinkling star-light. Yet, feeding the animals and the family remains waiting for them. After such long exhausting day, they have much little rest/sleep and have to wake up for early in order to begin another hectic day. Even during slack season from farm activities, women have reported that they collect firewood, and get engaged in some kind of income generating activities such as, Namlo (headband used in carrying loads) weaving in between domestic chores and also while talking to the visitors (See Chhetri and Rana 1994).

Elderly women in the study sites commented that with the development of drudgery reducing technology and other changes like the setting up of rice

and flour mills, road construction, time saving devices such as pressure cooker, improved stoves and so on, women's work have been simplified and made easier. They also agree that because of community forestry developments in the area, time for collecting forest products is reduced. In other words, the elderly women see a difference in the stress caused by the type of work they did as young women in contrast to what their daughters and daughters-in-laws have to do.

For instance, a 72-year-old Tamang woman of Asine, (Thulosirubari of Sindhu Palchok district) recalled her days as a young women and said: "We had to walk all the way to Kathmandu, for 3 days (one way) to buy salt, pots, mustard oil, kerosene, clothing, etc. While going on such trips we had to carry our own flour for dhindo (thick porridge/mush), cooking utensils, firewood and sal leaf plates. It sounds funny now but we did all that. We neither had delicious food to eat nor good clothes to wear on as today." She finished by asserting that things are much better today. Another elderly Chhetri women (about 65 years old) of Kabhre Bhanjyang (in Kabhre Palandchok district) compared her work with that of the young women today and argued that she used to get up very early in the morning and finish pounding 8-10 pathis of rice on a dhiki (traditional rice pounding device) or grinding few pathis of corn or millet in a janto (traditional hand-grinding device made with stone) before dawn. She said: "Our daughters-in-law go to the mills even for grinding small amount of dal (lentil) rather than use the janto". A Bahun woman (age 55) of Kamiko Pandhero (Kavre) added, "We had to walk all the way to a ghatta (traditional water mill) in Roshi Khola, near Panauti for a whole day in order to grind cereals. Our daughters-in-law have access to the electric grinding mills just at the door steps (in Kavre Bhanjyang) and rice mills in Dhulikhel (1 hour walk at the most)". From what these elderly women reported in a comparative view, it appears that life must have become much easier for village women within the past 2-3 decades.

But, the question before us is: Do village women have some leisure time now as a result of the developments? As the elderly women say the work of village women may have been simplified because of some modern innovations. So things are different today. But on the other hand, with many of the recent developments like the opening up of dairy development centers (e.g., in Daduwa and Kabhre Bhanjyang) intensification of land use and production of cash crops for market (in Asine), extra work loads seem to have been added for local women. The women in the study sites in general agreed

that they are required to work harder to feed their cattle and buffaloes well to ensure that they produce more milk as well as to produce more and quality crops in their farms so that the family could earn some extra income regularly. This study corroborates a similar finding discussed by Bhatt et.al. (1997) that the business of livestock production in the hill community have posed constraints on rural women of livestock-maintaining households, because unlike agricultural production, livestock production occurring year round, required a rigorous daily work combined with daily household chores.

From group discussions with men and women in the study sites it was revealed that large number of young and able-bodied men were away during most of the year from their villages. Consequently, women are left behind with more responsibilities at home and in the village. Off-farm employment of men away from the village; seasonal utensil business (Lapse and Gaurati); production of cash crops like garlic, vegetables (in Asine); and production of milk for dairy (in Daduwa and Kabhre Bhanjyang) were reported to have increased women's workload in the village. Women not only have to perform what have always been their jobs, but they also have to fulfil men's works and responsibilities during their absence from the village (see Chhetri and Rana 1994, Gurung 1999, Thapa 1999).

Thus we see that some modern innovations (e.g., the rice and flour mills) have made life easier (or at least reduced the drudgeries of having to grind or pound cereals in the 'morning' hours before day light) for village women today. But other types of developments (e.g., the market access or commodification of farm products) have kept those women as busy as ever.

In villages closer to towns or district headquarters, women also revealed that most of their men do not work at home, farm or forest because they were working in offices. Men prefer to wander about when there is no office or work outside rather than staying home and giving a hand in women's work. If men could change such attitude about work and help their women, perhaps things would be much different for rural women in Nepal.

Attitude of Men: Social Expectations of Women

Pandey (1990) pointed out that women were rarely consulted in forest related projects because they were seen as "destroyers of forests". This kind of attitude discourages their participation. Gronow (1987) found that an all-female forest management committee (Dolakha) which was accepted by the community and welcomed by women remained ineffective and unable to

implement its decisions due to lack of credibility and support by men. But Inserra (1988) saw little resistance from the community. She believed that women have worked successfully on mixed and all-female forest management committees in Nepal. The forest users group members of Asine (Thulo Sirubari of Sindhu Palchok) for instance, have set an example by entrusting women with a decision-making and management role. Their practice and experience has revealed a fact that if women are well motivated and have the support and trust of the local men and elite, they can do forest management activities effectively and successfully. Thus it is evident that if the local men can trust their women, the latter could do things that are perceived as difficult for women. The women's committee of Asine is managing its activities effectively with strong support and motivation from the local elite and men in the village. There is neither any fence around the forest nor is there any watcher guarding it, yet the users feel happy that there have been no problems of stealing forest products or similar offences. Even at times, those women did not hesitate to impose a penalty on one of the elites (male) from the advisory committee for breaking the rule. The man who committed the offence said in a supportive tone: "I liked their decision. I paid the fine thinking that this will be a lesson for others not to break the rules in the future". This clearly means that women take their responsibilities in CF seriously. Besides, if men adopt an open or positive attitude, they do not have to feel offended by women imposing rules on them.

The case of Tamang FUG in Asine suggests that women would happily take part in any development endeavours and/or status raising activities in their village if they receive strong support and motivation from male members of their community. In the absence of open and positive attitude among village men and elite towards their womenfolk, things can be very different. Let me illustrate this with an observation from a village called Daduwa which is less than one hours' walking distance away from Asine. In Daduwa (Thulo Sirubari, Sindhupalchok), a predominantly Brahman-Chhetri village, the women seem to have been discouraged by their men even from going to the adult literacy class. Women in Daduwa reported that the local men teased women that they were not children to be attending the classes. It was revealed in the group discussion (at Daduwa) that, some women were not only being teased by young men, but were also discouraged by their fathers-in-law from attending such public gatherings. In Asine (Tamang villages), 40 women were found to be learning to read and write in adult literacy class with all the

support of their men. Some women came to the class in spite of having to carry their babies on their back. In this Tamang community, men were also found to be sharing household chores (cooking or taking care of babies) while the women attended the adult literacy classes. Perhaps the Brahmans in villages like Daduwa have a lesson to learn from the Tamangs of Asine.

In Daduwa (the Bahun-Chhetri village), it was also found that women have limited access to information related to CF activities. Men who attend meetings/public gatherings often did not communicate to their women about the important decisions made at the meetings concerning forest-related activities. A similar finding was reported by Shrestha (1992) in Nala village (Kabhre district), where she found that majority of women including wives of UGC members were not aware of user committee, their meeting dates and time.

From the above illustrations, it can be argued that women would happily take part in any development endeavors and status raising activities in their village if they receive strong support and motivation from male members of their community. For example in Daduwa, a predominantly Bahun-Chhetri village, there appears to be a strong will among the women for learning new skills and raising their social status. But the male members in their community do not seem to always favour this. In contrast, in a Tamang community (same VDC), the men were found to be supportive of their women learning to read and write. They also had given all the support needed by the women FUG committee for the protection and management of their CF. From these two contrasting cases, we may conclude that the support and motivation from local males and elites plays a vital role in raising women's confidence towards forest management. This could be true for any other program aiming at empowering women or working towards a gender-balanced approach in development.

Women's Role in Decision-Making: How Far are They Involved?

Women are not directly involved in decision making in development activities at community level. Their participation is limited in labour contribution in the form of pitting, planting, watering, cleaning, thinning, pruning, harvesting, etc, in community forestry activities. Women and children of Daduwa reported that they had participated along with men in carrying seedling from the road-head, as well as in pitting and planting work in the CF. But they were not always involved in FUG gatherings or decision making or at management

planning. Invitation to participate in the meeting and gatherings are often understood that they are for household heads (who are generally men). Women are not invited to the meetings nor are they encouraged to participate in them so long as male members in the household are around.

Although local elite supported women in forest/community development activities (e.g., in Asine), it was found that the women were not considered as important in planning and decision-making process. Committee (all women) members of the FUG, including the president said that they were not informed as to how the committee was formed to begin with. Ful Maya Tamang, the chairperson of the FUG committee revealed that the men in the assembly simply asked her and other female members to put Lyapche (thumb print/signature) in the register and then declared that they had formed a women's FUG management committee. She added: "I could not sleep properly that night thinking what was going to happen?" Ful Maya and her friends have done well with the task given to them. However, they simply felt that there was a lot of pressure on them. It appears that merely selecting women or increasing sex ratios of committee membership in any development activities or programmes neither promotes women's genuine participation nor expands their level of awareness about it. One women member of the milk collection committee in Daduwa village even did not know the names of the committee members she was representing.

It was found that most of the women including the Committee President of Kamiko Pandhero FUG (in Kabhre) did not know that they (users) were allowed to harvest the products from their forest. When we visited her village in 1994, she showed us the forest and asked whether it looked well protected. From what she said, it was clear that she did not know that the group and the committee had any decision-making authority. She felt that she was a mere watcher for the CF (and wondered why she was not being paid!). She was surprised to hear that the forest is theirs to manage and use. From this it is evident that, women were involved in the forest management/development because it is required to do so. They were not involved in decision-making because it was not mandatory.

It may be argued that women's participation in forestry should not be conceived "mechanically". The belief that their inclusion in the committees translates to their effective participation is faulty. Because inclusion of women in the committees may not necessarily reflect their involvement in the decision making process. In some cases the user groups make decisions and

the committee performs an executive role only. In other cases decisions are made by the committee where women's numbers are minimal. For example, some women involved in forest users committee in Gaurati Chyandanda FUG of Sindhupalchok were removed from the committee for not being "active" (i.e. not being able to attend all committee meetings) due to their heavy household responsibilities. Of course, those women did come to the forest management activities (i.e., cleaning of the forest, pruning of branches, or thinning activities in CF). But the male dominated committee and assembly decided that attending meetings was more important.

Women perhaps with ignorance of their own potential or heavier workload or rigid work domain, do not think it necessary to attend meetings or community gatherings. For instance, it seems that women in predominantly Brahman/Chhetri village in Kavre, neither take initiative by themselves nor are inspired by their family members to do so. A 56-year-old Jaisi woman of Kabhre Bhanjyang despite of being de facto household head, (husband and sons were away from home working and/or studying in Kathmandu), retorted, "Why should we (women) go to the meetings? If our men were around, they would have gone to such meetings"

From the discussion of case materials above, it is evident that women's participation in forestry or other development activities is constrained by factors related to the social, cultural and economic realities of Nepali society. The main hindrance or the facilitating factors for women's involvement in public spheres in the villages seems to be manifest in the attitude of men towards women, both at the household level and the community level. For instance, the Tamang women of Asine were not hindered by their men from participating in development and their status raising activities while the opposite was true for the Brahman/Chhetri women of Daduwa. Tamang men in Asine seemed to have a more open attitude towards the involvement of their women in local development activities. In many places in Nepal, the social expectation of women is such that they are not seen as partners in development but are instead taken as 'means' to development. The idea of women being the 'other half' of the society, or equal partners, or 'the other wheel of the chariot of society' remains a rhetoric. The attitudes of people in the society will need to change before things start to move smoothly—i.e., with a gender balance in any development programs and activities.

Strategies to Overcome the Constraints: Some Practical Ideas

Constraints of women's participation in forestry or development activities as we have seen are related to social and cultural norms, values and practices of our society. Any strategies aimed at combating such constraints will show their results slowly since cultural norms, values and beliefs do not always change overnight. Keeping this in mind, I suggest some strategies as "practical ideas" that have emerged out of field observations and discussions with women in the villages. I believe that some of these could have practical implications for bringing about a gender balanced practices in community forestry at the local level.

Change in Social Attitudes and Practices

Although changing men's attitudes and practices regarding women's work is considered requiring "new and untested" strategies (UNICEF 1996:129) the perceptions of men and women towards women's participation in development activities could be changed through training and mass awareness raising activities. Awareness raising of any one particular group men or women would not help to solve the problem since neither one exists in isolation. They have to be seen in relation to each other as parts of the system. Awareness raising programs as such should ensure that, men and women take part in development endeavors as partners whether it be at family level or at community and village level development. A 'holistic' approach to this issue can be more practical than any other means used for the purpose.

Non-formal Education Focused on Gender Awareness Raising

Non-formal education is considered an entry point to development programs for women and men. It has been reported very effective to reach the most disadvantaged group of rural women to raise their awareness about various opportunities and to organize them for collective objectives (Acharya, 1993, Denholm 1993). Adding gender awareness and sensitization package in literacy classes and providing some incentives (e.g. stationary, posters, calendars, etc. to introduce gender issues to adults) would encourage women and men to learn about and respect each other. It could be emphasized that men and women take part in development endeavors as partners whether it be at family level or at community and village level development. This could pave the way for a gradual change in social attitude and norms towards women (which is vital) and their worth in the society and culture.

Involvement for Active and Effective Participation of Women

Involvement of women in development activities should not be taken as a physical presentation or a mere nomination of women rather it has to be understood as having their role in decision-making. As the saying goes, "Dhanle dhan thap..." and "Jahan gahiro tehin ashriyo" (wealth accumulates wealth), similarly, women's active participation in development ensures women's effective participation. Confidence of women, their active participation, and power of decision-making in development activities are factors reinforcing each other. As a result, changes will begin to manifest in their way of thinking and acting. Such participation will give women a genuine measure of access, participation and control, and confidence necessary to initiate changes in their own homes (see UNICEF1996:129)

Initiatives to be Taken by Field Staff

Development workers or extension workers are the ones who often interact with men and women in the village with regard to development programs and projects. If they take initiative and incentives for involving women along with men, women would be more than happy to take part or be involved in any development endeavors. For instance, a female Ranger of Kavre District revealed (during our field work) that more women participated when she took initiatives particularly to invite women and request men to send their women to take part in community forest activities. Thus field level staff for example, can play a vital role in increasing women's participation in activities like setting up Forest User Groups, discussing user rights and responsibilities, making important decisions on rules and regulations, etc.

To overcome the constraints discussed above, men's attitude towards women as well as social and organizational practice (which are the main constraints) need to be changed. Efforts for this has to come from all sides e.g., project planners, local elites, social workers, local NGOs, local authorities, educated men and women in the area, etc. In order to make women's participation effective, they must be seen as partners equal to men in forestry/development activities and most importantly they should be given equal role in decision-making.

Summary and Conclusions

Village women have heavier workload than their men. Their workload has more or less remained the same even after "development" reached their

village. Because of heavy responsibilities on household chores and farm works, women get very little spare time to participate in community / village level development activities on a regular basis.

If the local men can trust their women and provide the necessary support, the latter could do things that are perceived as difficult for women. People (Tamangs) in Kali Devasthan forest user groups have set an example by entrusting women in UGC with a decision making and management role. Those women have already set a good example of managing forest successfully with the help, support and motivation of the local men / elites.

Support and motivation from local males and elites plays vital role in raising women's social status as well as confidence, which is essential for any development activities in general and forestry in particular. The Brahman/Chhetri men in the study area, for instance, were found to be less supportive of their women's attempts towards making themselves literate by joining the adult literacy classes. The Tamang community in the same area gave a contrasting impression. It appears that social and cultural norms and values of various caste and ethnic groups towards gender roles should also be understood in order to find out the factor which may facilitate or inhibit women's active and effective participation in public activities including community forestry.

Heavier workload of rural women appears to be the main constraint of their active and effective participation in development activities. They would happily take part in any development endeavors or status raising activities in their villages if they receive strong support and motivation from male members of their community. Mass awareness generating and training to sensitize men and women will promote support from the males. Involvement of women in development activities should not merely be understood in terms of their physical participation or getting nominated into committees. It is more critical that men and women share power and authority in decision-making from the household-level upwards. Sharing of responsibilities and benefits as well by both men and women would be equally important for the success of a rural development program like community forestry in Nepal.

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Notes

1. The FUGs studied included: Kali Devasthan (natural forest managed by Tamang women), and Gaurati Chyandanda (planted forest managed by heterogeneous users) in Sindhu Palchok district. Similarly, the FUGs from Bhandarkhiarka (natural forest managed by high caste women), Ghoda Ladeko Bhiri (planted forest managed by "lower caste" users), Kami Ko Pandhero (planted forest managed by mixed caste groups (Kami, Damai and Brahman), and Gaukhureswar (natural forest management with incentives for women's participation) were included from Kabhure Palanchok district (see Chhetri and Rana 1994 for a detailed report).

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THE PROBLEM OF BHUTANESE REFUGEES AND COMPARISON WITH TIBETAN REFUGEES IN NEPAL¹

Bhim P. Subedi

The Context

Refugee problem is not new in Nepal. After 1950 when the country opened up for the outside world, several refugee groups have taken shelter in Nepal. Among them the Bhutanese are the latest group of all refugees whereas the Tibetans, who largely entered Nepal in 1959, are the first group. With the Bhutanese refugees what is new, however, is the scale and the time when more than 50 percent of Nepalese population live below absolute poverty level. Apart from these two refugee groups, there are other "refugees" living in the country many of whom are not internationally acknowledged as refugees. Important among them include the Burmese of Nepali origin who were displaced after nationalisation act of Burma in 1964; the Nepalese from North-eastern hill states of India due to indigenous people's movement there and Bihari Muslims from Bangladesh were displaced after being alleged of their allegiance to Pakistani forces during the independent movement of Bangladesh in 1971. In addition, some studies also document that Kashmiris and Punjabis are also sheltered in sizeable number in Nepal lately (see, special issue of *Kanun ko phulbari* 1998).

Refugees sheltering in Nepal can be grouped into two broad categories: those with Nepalese ethnic origin and those with other ethnic origin. Refugees with Nepalese ethnic-origin include Bhutanese refugees, Burmese "refugees" and "refugees" from northeastern India. Likewise, refugees with other ethnic origin include Tibetans, Bihari Muslims, Kashmiri and Punjabi refugees. Of all these refugee groups whereas Tibetans are widely acknowledged in the world scale, Bhutanese are gradually being recognized

as such region. However, no specific details of other refugee groups are available and thus their situation poorly known.

The main objective of this paper is to present size, distribution, and area of origin and the context of being displaced among Bhutanese refugees and to compare their attributes with Tibetan refugees in Nepal. Being an introductory paper it is beyond its scope to present detail discussion of underlying reasons on why and how both these groups turned into refugee. Whereas much has been written about Tibetan refugees (Chhetri 1990, Dietrich 1998, Gombo 1985), the literature on Bhutanese refugees is limited (Baral 1993, Phuyal 1998). In this context, this paper focuses more on Bhutanese refugees compared with Tibetan refugees primarily for poorly acknowledged status of Bhutanese refugees in areas outside South Asia².

Conceptual Considerations

Conventional migration research categorizes refugees as forced international migrants who leave their homeland against their will (Petersen 1958; Hauser and Duncan, 1959; Bogue 1969). Likewise UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951 specifies refugee as person who owing to a "well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." It is generally assumed that there are some common principles of similarity between political refugees and that they belong to deprived and poor group at the sheltered area. The common principles of similarity between political refugee groups emerge primarily through their cause, sufferings in the process of becoming refugee, adjustment problem in the host area, emotional attachment to homeland, urge to return to their home country and organization of protest activities to this effect.

Empirical research demonstrates two often-contrary positions on the role of refugees in the host country. One position stresses the positive role and posits that refugees represent a pool of potential human capital. It takes the view that for reasons of being young and energetic but deprived of activity space refugees prove very positive human capital. Proper utilization of their skills can largely contribute economic and social development of the host area. Chinese refugee fleeing to Hong Kong from the Mainland China after 1949 is an example. Hong Kong's present status as one of the most commercialized and industrialized cities in Asia owes much to these refugees

(Weeks 1992; Endacott 1973). Its success was built on the backs of an earlier generation of refugees. It is these refugees who were not only young and energetic but also brought skills, talents and motivations to work. And these attributes of early refugees were the main factors behind speedy economic development of Hong Kong.

The other position holds refugees as a trough of potential trouble for the host country. Accordingly, refugees are not only rejected peoples but also the unwanted migrants to the receiving countries (Weiner 1991) especially when host countries are faced with their own demographic pressures (Zolberg 1989; Zolberg et al. 1986). The literature states that at times elites and governments deliberately project cross border migration as threatening national security and integrity (see Bose and Manchanda 1997). Pakistan, which shelters the largest size of refugees in South Asia, is an example of the trouble of refugee for the host country. Pakistan has faced the large scale Afghan refugee problem for more than two decades, the impact of which has been evident on communal violence and the rise of ethno-nationalism (Patel 1995).

As political refugees, the two refugee groups in Nepal namely Bhutanese and Tibetan are expected to hold many common characteristics. But despite general expectations of much similarity between these two groups of refugees, this paper argues that the two referent groups differ considerably from their attributes both before and after becoming of refugee. The position of Nepal government in resettling or repatriating them differs and so is their considerable impact on local and national economy. Moreover, these two movements have occurred under diverse historical and geographical circumstances. The state of Bhutanese and Tibetan refugees indicates that they are close to two extreme positions stated earlier with Tibetans representing relatively positive impact and successful adjustment while Bhutanese representing a negative situation. Furthermore, the Bhutanese, confined to the camps are faced with difficulty in repatriation while any attempts to accommodate these refugees within Nepal has been considered to be disastrous in terms of jobs, housing and education facilities to the natives when facilities such as these are already highly limited in the country.

These two groups in selected attributes is the main focus of fourth section while the fifth section concludes the paper with some speculative note on the future of Bhutanese refugees based on the lessons learnt from the current status of Tibetan refugees in Nepal.

Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal

On 12 December 1990, a group of 60 Bhutanese of Nepalese ethnic origin (BONO) entered Nepal from Kankarbhita entry point as asylum seekers. For humanitarian ground and for reasons of belonging to same ethnic origin, local residents expressed sympathy over their cause. As a result, they provided food and helped them shelter at Maidhar of Jhapa district in Eastern Nepal. Subsequent years witnessed a large flow of BONO who were actively engaged in expressing their opposition to the discriminatory policy of the ruling group in Bhutan. Nepal, already troubled with high rate of population growth, then became entrapped into the problem of Bhutanese refugees.

Bhutanese refugees are citizens of Bhutan who are displaced by recent state policies of *Drukpa* ruling elite discriminating the southerner BONO who are known as *Lhotshampas* in the *Dzonkha* dialect of Bhutan. They have been sheltering outside Bhutan due to "well-founded fear" of persecution. Many BONO turned into refugees primarily because whereas some protested against the discriminatory state policy of language, religion, nationality, and culture, others were forced to leave for allegations that they supported opposition to the government and that their relatives were accused of acting against *tsa-wa-sum* (king, country and the government). Some have regarded their cause as an attempt of "ethnic cleansing" (Pradhan 1998) resulting into denial of the right to nationality for ethnic Nepalese.

Both the sending and receiving countries of Bhutanese refugees i.e., Bhutan and Nepal are small, poor and backward Himalayan kingdoms in South Asia (Haq and Haq 1998). Bhutan is roughly one-third the area of Nepal. They do not share common boundaries. They are surrounded by India on three sides and only on the North that both of them share borders with China (Tibet). The Indian states of West Bengal and Sikkim lie in between these two countries.

Hills and mountains with small proportion of plain land in the South dominate the physical landscape of both these countries. The plain land of Bhutan is called the *Duars* and that of Nepal the *Tarai*. Both these areas were considered malaria prone in the past. The government policy then was to encourage people to come from neighbouring countries and settle there so that these areas could be transformed into arable land (Karan and Ijima 1987).

Except for the population-size and level of urbanisation in which Nepal far outweighs, most other demographic indicators in these countries are comparable. But Bhutan's GNP per capita is almost double that of Nepal. On

the contrary, the population per hectare of arable land is higher in Bhutan than in Nepal (RGOB 1991). At present, most of Bhutan's concentration of settlement is in the valleys and in the South. Nepal's population is also largely confined to the plains (*Tarai*) and the mid-land valleys (CBS 1997). The population concentration is higher in eastern *Tarai* than the western and mid-western ones. Ironically, with the sheltering BONO, it is eastern *Tarai* that has suffered with the problem of BONO refugees.

Size, Distribution in the Camps and Main Areas of Origin

The Bhutanese refugee population is estimated to have reached about 130,000 by 2000 A.D. Most of the earlier estimates in the late 1990s total their size around 100,000. Considering the type of sheltering there are two groups of BONO refugees: those in the camps for which reliable figures are available and those scattered elsewhere. Those sheltered in seven camps number about 98,000 by September 1999 (RCU 1999). Among those scattered elsewhere, estimate of those within Nepal ranges from 8-10,000 (Lutheran World Federation: Annual Report, 1998) to about 15,000 (Pradhan 1998). In addition, no less than 20,000 are estimated to have been living in the hills of Assam and West Bengal (*Refugee Watch* 1996). Thus, the population size of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal is estimated to be 110,000 and those outside Nepal e.g. in India about 20,000.

BONO refugees are currently sheltered at five locations in two districts in southeastern Nepal. They are sheltered in seven UNHCR sponsored camps. Among them six camps are located in Jhapa district and one in Morang district (Map 1). Goldhap was the first planned camp to shelter these refugees. Other camps were established later. Latest of all is Khudnabari, located on the northwestern part of Jhapa district. Since February 1993, except for family reunion, all new arrivals have been sheltered in Khudnabari.

More than 78 thousand refugees have been sheltered in Jhapa district. Nearly 50 percent of the total refugees are sheltered in a single location, i.e., Beldangi (Table 1). There are three separate camps in Beldangi. These camps are located quite close to Damak municipality. All three there are among the bigger camps. Sanischare (Pathari) camp in Morang district shelters about 20 percent of the BONO refugee in the camps.

Table 1: Bhutanese Refugees at Various Camps in Nepal

Location Camps		Households		Population			
District	Camps	Number	Percent	Male	Female	Total	Percent
Jhapa	Beldangi I	2,524	16.8	8,563	8,109	16,672	17.1
	Beldangi II	3,358	22.3	10,569	10,287	20,856	21.4
	Beldangi III	1,671	11.1	5,394	5,167	10,561	10.9
	Khudnabari	1,959	13.0	6,137	6,057	12,194	12.5
	Timai	1,377	9.2	4,748	4,501	9,249	9.5
	Goldhap	1,348	9.0	4,505	4,169	8,674	9.0
Morang	Sanischare	2,790	18.6	9,687	9,264	18,951	19.6
Total		15,027	100	49,603	47,554	97,157	100

Source: Refugee Co-ordination Unit, September 1999.

Of all the camps, Goldhap shelters the smallest number of refugees. The second smallest one is Timai, located in the far northeastern Jhapa. The average household size of refugees in the camps is 6.5 persons. This figure is higher compared with Nepal's national average of 5.6 (1991). The proportion of female refugee is 48.9 percent and that of male 51.1 percent.

Bhutanese refugee problem is area specific. Southern Bhutan is the main area of refugee origin. Administratively, Bhutan is divided into 20 main divisions (districts) called Dzongkhag and 197 sub-divisions called Gewogs (blocks). Most of the refugees have come from 6 Dzongkhags of the South (Map 2). These are Samtse (Samchi), Sarpang (Sarbhag), Tsirang (Chirang), Daga (Dagana), Chhukha and Samdrup Jongkha (Samdrup Jonker). Among these Dzongkhags, the largest proportion of refugees has come from Sarpang Dzongkhag.³

Bhutan often claims that many refugees living in the camps are from other places in South Asia rather than from Bhutan. But information about place of origin of refugees among refugees living in camps in Nepal suggests that all refugees there have come from Bhutan and not from elsewhere in South Asia. Among refugees in the camps, 31 percent have their origin in Sarpang Dzongkhag followed by Tsirang (22 percent). Similarly, 19 percent is from Daga and 15 percent from Samtse. Of all the six Dzongkhags, the lowest proportion has come from Chhukha. Above all, refugees have come from about one-third of the total Dzongkhags of Bhutan.

The Becoming of Refugee

BONO refugee problem is a special case of migration that demonstrates what happens when early arrivals and late arrivals occupy different geographical niches (in this case *the North* and *the South*) to develop one's own cultural identity with no or very little interaction between these groups but live in the same nation-state. It is a case where, after centuries of living in harmony, the minority's group in power forces for homogenous national identity by imposing its language, religion and culture to the largest group. The group in power asserts "one people, one nation" whereas the victims argue for "unity in diversity."

The Bhutanese refugee problem is related to the history of Bhutan's early settlement. The Nepalese were invited to settle in Southern Bhutan that was considered as region of refuge by then settlers of Bhutan namely the Sharchops and Drukpas who had occupied the northern parts of Bhutan. Bhutan's demography consists of three main groups: Sharchops, Drukpas and Lhotshampas. Sharchops with their ancestry in the high hills of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh are considered the oldest settled group there (Shrestha 1999). They constitute about 30 percent of the total population at present. The ruling *Drukpa* entered Bhutan from Tibet between 13th to 17th centuries with Lama Faso as the architect on their entry in the 13th century (Mehra 1974). Later with the coming of Dwag-wong Nam-Gyal from Kham region, this group established as the ruling class in 1616 A.D. This group comprises about 20 percent of the population at present. The *Lhotshampas*, the present troubled group, entered Bhutan between 17th to 20th centuries. They constitute at least the single largest group although some estimates about them go as high as over 50 percent (Giri 1998).

Once Bhutan was unified around 1616 A.D., Syab-dung Dug-wong Nam-Gyal, the first religious ruler of unified Bhutan began to establish relations with neighbouring countries. There was no unified Nepal then. In this process, he visited Ram Shah of Gorkha (Nepal) in 1624. Bhutan was in desperate need of human resources then. It also had to ensure the extent of territorial control in the South. Subsequent to this visit he invited the Nepalese and encouraged them to inhabit the warm south. On his request, a small group of Nepalese joined Nam-gyal's return visit from Gorkha in 1624 A.D. and 1640 A.D. (Dhungel 1989). With this beginning, the other Nepalese from the eastern hills subsequently followed them in a form of chain migration. This chain migration intensified in the late 19th and early 20th century when

population pressure in the mid-hills of Nepal was high, and many Nepalese were migrating to northeastern hills of India for wage work, both agricultural and non-agricultural. During this movement some of them entered Southern Bhutan and settled there. Once this immigrant group prospered through developing resources and turned into distinct group of sizeable population, the ruling group felt them as a threat to their socio-cultural control. In the mean time the *Lhotshampas* also began to argue for human rights and non-discrimination in the local and state affairs.

The main factor behind Bhutanese refugees is the *Drukpa* elite's *perceived fear* of BONO on their established monopoly in politics and demographics (ethnic and religious) of Bhutan together with their *desperate actions* against these *Lhotshampas*. These actions were taken so that *Drukpa* could continue their absolute control over political demography and culture there. This was orchestrated through imposition of carefully designed Acts and *Kaso* (royal orders) that not only expelled many *Lhotshampas* but also were in direct violation of their Hinduism based customary socio-cultural system and life-style. *Lhotshampas* were ordered to adopt Tibetan based *Drukpa* culture, language (Dzongkha) and religion (Mahayan Buddhism). Requests of *Lhotshampas* to amend these orders allowing them to continue their customary socio-cultural practice through appeals first and then by peaceful demonstrations further deteriorated the perceived fear among the ruling elite. At the end, they systematically evicted large number of *Lhotshampas* involved in their request for fair share in the state affairs.

Details of factors related to BONO turning into refugee are discussed elsewhere (Subedi 2001). Suffice it to say that main explanation comes from political-demographic perspective. The cultural-religious perspective stressing the conflict as a result of Tibetan Buddhism of ruling group versus the Hinduism based cultural practices of *Lhotshampas* has some merits but the underlying reasons are deeply rooted to the perceived threat to *Drukpa's* future political and demographic control over Bhutan.

The political demography of who should continue to rule and whose identity should prevail in the nation-state is the most important reason behind pushing *Lhotshampas* into refugee status. *Drukpa* groups who have ruled Bhutan for centuries numerically comprise about 20 percent. The *Lhotshampas* who in the beginning of this century were considered as minority groups in the South turned out to be largest group by the fourth quarter of this century. Some reports note their proportion to be as high as 53

percent (Giri 1998). This demographic number means Lhotshampas having advantage over other groups if globalization of human rights and democratic political norms are to be established in the country. Over several decades of 20th century, their growth rates have been high through both natural increase and migration. They have been exposed more to outside world and have demonstrated to be more entrepreneurial than others, further adding the perceived threat.

In Bhutan, the hereditary monarchy was established in 1907 with Ugyen Wangchuk as the first monarch. The kingdom does not have written constitution. The king with cabinet appointed by himself holds absolute power. In recent decades, with increasing trend of globalization of human rights, movement towards democracy and establishment of democratic governments in neighbouring countries the fear of Drukpa ruling elite surrounding the royal government exasperated for distressing future political stronghold. The infiltration of Lhotshampas in government positions and their ethnic similarities with countries actively involved in restoration of democracy further aggravated the fear. Thus, it was important for Drukpa elite to devise mechanism to keep Lhotshampas off the politico-administrative scene and diffuse (or depopulate) their stronghold south. The ruling elite put forwarded the argument of "nation building" with an agenda of *one people one nation* as the main instrument to serve this purpose. Once actions towards this direction were commented by leading Lhotshampas, the succeeding actions and reactions between those in power and the BONO in general turned many latter groups into refugee.

The Tibetan Refugees in Nepal

The Tibetans entered Nepal as refugees forty years ago. The Tibetans turned into refugees after Tibet came under the control of China in 1959 and the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetans, escaped to India on March 17, 1959. He declared the formation of Tibetan Government in Exile or the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) at Dharmashala (India) in April 1959. Following the Dalai Lama's escape, about 100,000 Tibetan left Tibet to take refuge elsewhere although the numbers differ in various reports (Conway 1975, Michael 1985). The majority joined their leader in India while others stayed in Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan.

The flow of Tibetans in Nepal in 1959 is a small proportion of the main flow to India. Their total number staying in Nepal was estimated to be

around 15,000 then. UNHCR estimates 20,400 Tibetan refugee populations in Nepal by the end of 1998 (UNHCR Statistics 1998 Overview). The Tibetan refugees entered Nepal through the passes of Tatopani (Sindhupalchok), Rasuwa, Mustang, Dolpa, Humla and Walungchung Gola. About half of them are settled independently in Kathmandu and other places with mainly Tibetan speaking populations whereas about half are living in identifiable refugee settlements. A large proportion has been settled in relatively large settlements in urban areas of the Kathmandu valley and Pokhara. Likewise, there are small settlements of Tibetans in places like Walung (Taplejung), Solukhumbu, Rasuwa, Mustang, Baglung, Lumbini (Kapilvastu), Dolpa and Jumla (Map 4). Nevertheless, their settlements outside Kathmandu and Pokhara are small, and none have population over 1000. Their numbers in most of these settlements are between 200-500 (Dietrich 1998).

No details of specific areas of their origin are available. It is assumed that unlike the Bhutanese refugees these refugees have come from Tibet in general and not from specific sub-regions or districts. During this time no restriction on number to grant asylum was set by the government of Nepal. Initially some of them found shelter with relatives and other Sherpas in the mountain region but when the number crossing Nepal-China border increased it was not possible to find accommodation this way. With host government's approach to accommodate them, it was soon realized that refugees were in need of organized settlement. Many international donors were appealed for support. International Red Cross finally co-ordinated and supervised their settlement in the designated camps. It is often said that the donors often see aid to Tibetan refugees as humanitarian compensation for their state's political inability to help the Tibetan cause" (Norbu, cited in Dietrich, 1998:20).

A Comparison Between Bhutanese and Tibetan Refugees

Table 2 presents a comparison between the Bhutanese and Tibetan refugees in Nepal. This comparison is not exhaustive because the time dimension of these two groups of refugees is different. However, it demonstrates that there are more differences between these two refugee groups than there are similarities. In fact, except that both these groups were forced to leave their homeland and have been known as refugees such as Tibetan or Bhutanese, they differ in most other attributes. More importantly, even though the number of Bhutanese refugees is several times greater than that of Tibetans, their issue is little known outside South Asia.

The physical complexion, the sheltering locations and occupational characteristics of both these refugees are far distinct. The economic success of Tibetan refugees is their most notable feature. These refugees are far better off than one would think of any refugee. For them the free world had reason to express their concern on Tibetan refugee issue because their cause was related to the action of the communist world. Encouraging and supporting them to invest on carpet business and promotion of carpets made by Tibetan refugees in the western world cannot be explained as the actions of these refugees alone. On the contrary, the cause for BONO refugees in the 1990s and at present has been muted in the world arena amidst Afghan refugees, Bosnian case, let alone similar cases in African countries primarily Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia and Sierra Leone.

The political contexts of these refugees are also different. The Tibetan case has more to do with the political and ideological identity of People's Republic of China (PRC) and retraction of 17-point agreement between PRC and Tibetan government. But the case of BONO refugee is largely related to national ethnic identity meaning whose socio-cultural identity should prevail in the nation-state and an example of failure of timely regulation on immigration. A common characteristic of Asian countries is that national social identity is based on the symbolism of majority ethnicity (Bose 1998). But despite BONO constituting demographically largest group in the country, they have been turned to be victim of nation building and identity making of the group, which is not a majority in the country.

Table 2: Comparison of Bhutanese and Tibetan Refugees in Some Selected Attributes

Attributes of Refugees	Refugees	
	Tibetan	Bhutanese
Period of the event	Primarily 1959 and early 1960s	Early 1990s
Known to world opinion	- The problem better recognised because of the involvement of China, the largest concentration of human population and an emerging world power - Refugees not individual alone but rather as a national polity ... both the people and the cultural institution took refuge e.g. <i>Dalai Lama</i> taken asylum in India	- Poorly known in the world arena, Bhutan and Nepal both being small countries and both being dependents on India at various levels - Refugees came as individuals and families, and their flow was not associated with symbolic or political institutions
General Features	Mongoloid, Tibetan Buddhist	Indo-Aryan, Hindu
	- Complexion similar to people in the mountains of Nepal - Mountain inhabitants in Nepal are often considered as their descendants	- Similar to the people in the hills and lowlands in Nepal - Many of them could trace their ancestral roots in Nepal
	- Nepal, the 1st country of entry to provide asylum - Crossed the boundary and settled in the mountains and mid-land valleys	- India, the 1st country of entry but did not provide asylum - Crossed India and entered Nepal <i>Tarai</i>
Major/minor recipient	India the recipient of the main flow	Nepal the recipient of the main flow
	Refugees in Nepal form a small proportion of the flow	Nepal the only country providing formal shelter in the UNHCR supported camps
Occupational features	Large groups engaged in activities outside agriculture. Many were rich merchants, businessmen, noblemen and their families (Conway, 1975)	Previously engaged in farming activities

Attributes of Refugees	Refugees	
	Tibetan	Bhutanese
	- Once sheltered earning living through non-agricultural activities was not difficult - Majority sheltered in urban areas (e.g. Kathmandu, Pokhara)	- Once farmland was confiscated, not so easy for them to adapt to other livelihood strategies - Overwhelming majority sheltered in rural areas in eastern <i>Tarai</i>
Success/failure status	- One of the most successful refugee communities in the world of refugees - After only six years no external assistance needed - Developed their own economic niche with carpet business	- Time gap not enough to assess success/failure status - After 10 years, the need of support is more now than ever before - Not very enterprising activities apparent, mainly concerned with going back though a few have started petty business and some go for wage labour
Active/inactive status	- Integrate them into the economic life of Nepal (see, Dietrich 1998) - Overtime the activism for free Tibet and return to homeland slowed down at least in terms of frequent demonstrations	- Repatriate them into their homeland as early as possible - Very actively demonstrating against discrimination of language, religion and culture, and for making plea for creating environment of safe return
Main factors	People's Republic of China's control over their territory in an attempt to liberate Tibet under 17 point agreement in May 1951 with assurance to recognise its autonomy, system of self-government, leadership of Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, respect Tibetan's religious freedom, improve people's livelihood	<i>Lhotshampas'</i> perceived fear of ruling groups (<i>Drukpa</i>) in the established cultural and political dominance in the state due to growing number of southerners and their prosperity in the south

Attributes of Refugees	Refugees	
	Tibetan	Bhutanese
	• Perceived problem in the religious freedom in the territory and the escape of Dalai Lama to India in March 17, 1959; their religious leader and the political institution • Deterioration of livelihood situation after the escape of their leader	• Systematic imposition of Buddhism based culture, religion, language and social systems, and failure to recognise the cultural and linguistic identity of <i>Lhotshampas</i> • <i>Lhotshampas</i> appeal for fair share and reactions against discriminatory policy of the state
Economic impact in the host community	• Largely positive because of the introduction of carpet industry with support from foreigners • Created jobs for the local residents	• Largely negative • Have taken the jobs of local poor although their low wage rates helped some locals

Being turned into refugee for diverse political and contextual factors and from two different countries, it is understandable that these two groups of refugees differ many of their social and economic attributes. Interestingly, the official approach of the host government has also been different for these two groups of refugees. During the time of Tibetan refugees for reasons of their relative small size, international politics (communist block versus free world) and the favourable demography of the country, Nepal's approach to Tibetan refugee was to integrate them into economic life of Nepal. On the contrary, in the 1990s, with the troublesome growth of both population and poverty in the country, Nepal is forced to take a policy of repatriating BONO refugees despite their cultural and ethnic similarities with Nepal and public sympathy for their cause.

Conclusion

Despite uncertainties of their future, optimism prevails among the Bhutanese refugees. So far there is only first generation Bhutanese and they are active plus the time gap is so long compared with Tibetan refugees. At the moment, they appear to be in a state of "nowhere" with failure of nine ministerial level committee talks to have significant achievement to repatriate. There are

several critical issues such as status categorisation, verification modalities, total or conditional repatriation and many others that have left the future of BONO refugees uncertain as it stands at present (*Kantipur* various dates; *Kathmandu Post* various dates). India's approach, which is very critical to resolve this issue, has not been encouraging so far. BONO Refugees are actively pursuing their case through media, street demonstrations (on capital cities of Nepal and India and in southern Bhutan), march to their homeland, and appeal to international organisations (AHURA 2000). The host country troubled by its own demographics, poverty and the political pressure from within is actively engaged in diplomatic efforts to facilitate their safe return.

The case of Tibetan refugees after 30 years in Nepal may be helpful in understanding about what may be the likely future of Bhutanese refugees. Studies report that among Tibetan refugees optimism to return has not gone away (Chhetri 1990). But after second and third generation being brought up in the host country and many early arrivals having taken naturalised citizenship in the host country (Siwakoti 1998), the optimism may be more emotional than real. Even in case of call from the Dalai Lama to go back, many have doubts, others preferred to stay where they are now instead of going to a place about which they know very little (Chhetri 1990). For the Bhutanese refugees it is not unlikely to happen parallel with time lapses especially when the second generation of Bhutanese refugees are brought up in the host areas. Religious, cultural and linguistic aspects that were rather different for Tibetans in their host area and that were disincentive to remain in host area do not apply among BONO refugees because for them, there is hardly any difference in all these aspects in the host area.

Finally, two groups of refugees differ more than they are alike. Even the emotional attachment to the area of origin i.e., the most common attribute of both the groups is not comparable because of the time gap. The Bhutanese seem to be serious to see their future in their homeland but with more time lapses and Bhutan's success in making Nepal agree to categorise, those in the camp into forcefully evicted bonafide Bhutanese, voluntarily migrated Bhutanese, non-nationals and Bhutanese involved in criminal activities. The problem and the repatriation process has become more complicated than ever before.

Notes

1. A word of caution is to be noted while making a comparison. The two events took place 30 years apart and some of the attributes may not be strictly comparable. While Bhutanese case is latest refugee problem in the 1990s, the Tibetan case is the first and internationally acknowledged refugee problem in Nepal.
2. People outside South Asia also sometimes refer Bhutanese refugees as Nepalese refugees. This was mentioned in the discussion in Asia Conference 2000 held in June 5-7 2000 at Oslo, Norway where the author presented a summarized version of this paper.
3. Data for the place of origin is based on 1996. As a result, the total number is lower than the one presented in earlier Table. It is assumed that the change in the total number in 1999 is not very different from the original distribution.

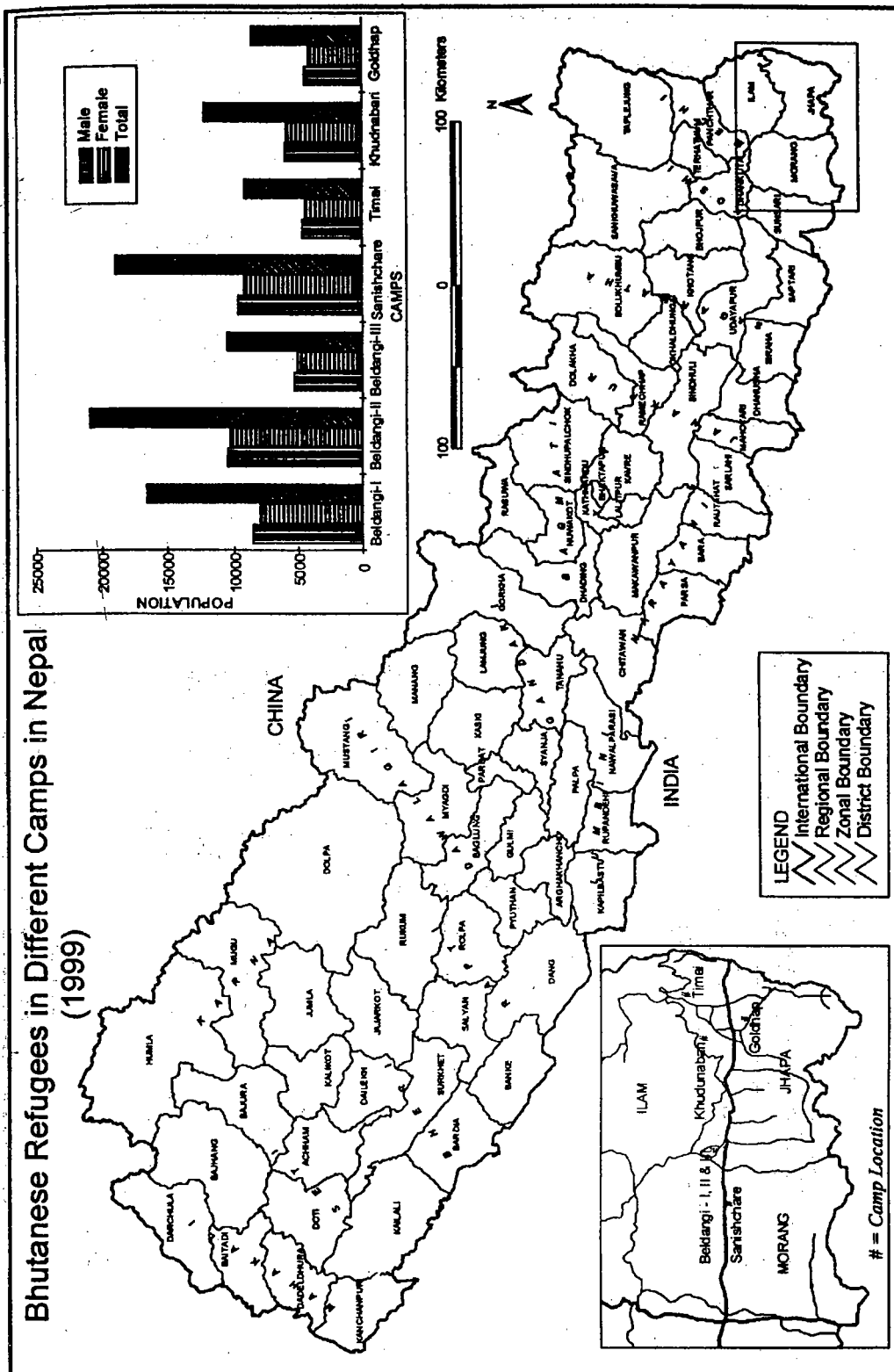
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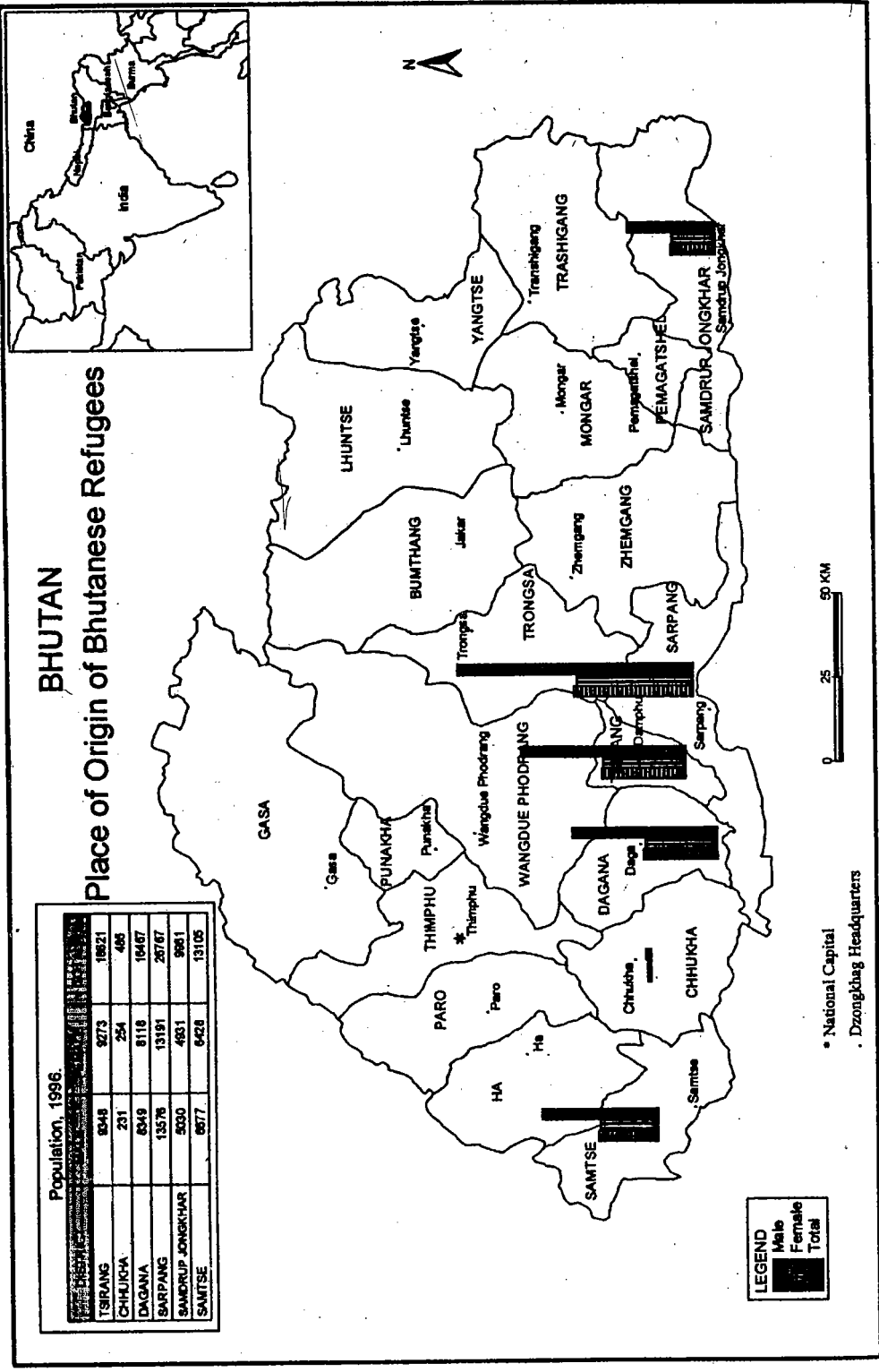
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Map-2



RESEARCH NOTE

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT: GLOBAL DEBATE ON NEPAL'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Chandra Bhadra

The Global Development Debate on Women

Women as a category had entered into the United Nations' agenda since its very onset. The Commission on Status of Women (CSW) was established at United Nations (UN) in 1946 as a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council (ESC). This Commission was to create guidelines and formulate actions to improve the situation of women in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational fields. During this period, concern for women was more of a protective nature rather than status oriented. As early as 1954, UN called on governments to abolish discrimination against women as stated in the principle of the UN Charter (1945), i. e., equality on the basis of race, sex, language, or religion.

During the 1960s, the issues of women's movement/feminist movement in the West were mainly on their reproductive rights (abortion, contraception, parenting), violence against women, sex discrimination, and freedom from the sexual domination. During this period, women also critiqued the UN's protective approach to women.

Recognition of Women as Agents of Development

In 1970, Esther Boserup's book, *Women's Role in Economic Development*, was published. Based on an extensive research work carried out in various developing countries of Asia, Latin America, and Africa about the role that women played in their respective economies. Boserup's work documents the extent of women's contribution to the national economy. Her research also establishes the fact that these women have been ignored as development

agents. Because the so-called development pundits are mostly Western white men who assume Third World women's role to be similar to that of their own women in the West. She argues that Western white men assume Third World women to be housewives rather than development agents. This resulted in Third World women being marginalized from development arena. This insight brought a whole new perspective on concerns for women within the development arena. The term "Women in Development" (WID) was then coined by the Women's Committee of the Chapter of the Society for International Development (SID) at Washington, D. C.

This new perspective also instigated change in UN's approach to women, which resulted in shifting its focus on women from protection-oriented approach to status-oriented approach. The UN's realization of women's marginalization from the mainstream development resulted in its direct approach to women. The declaration of 1975 as the "International Year of Women" followed by the declaration of the "Decade for Women (1976-1985)", marks the change in UN's focus on women.

With the WID approach the focus on the role of women shifted from the reproductive role to that of their productive role. The argument upon women's concerns was based on the assumption that women were marginalized from the development arena. Issues of their heavy work burden, low productivity, and low efficiency were raised. Advocacy during this period centred around women's access to services, such as education, health, training, and technology.

Considering the above assumption and advocacy, policies were formulated to enhance women's efficiency and productivity. Women-specific programmes were launched on literacy/education/training, technology development and dissemination, providing health services. The WID policies and programmes emphasized "improving the condition" of women without really questioning the distributive aspect of the productive resources and/or without questioning the existing capitalist mode of production system.

Move Towards Equity Approach

It was during the late 1970s that the feminist interjection was made into WID approach. Feminists argued that the term "Women In Development" gave a false notion as if women were outside of the economy and/or society and that they were to be integrated into the development. They asserted that women were always agents of development, hence the bottom line was the imperative

of "women for development" rather than the other way round of "development for women". The movement was that of Women and Development (WAD), i.e., a question of equity rather than Women in Development (WID), i.e., the question of integration.

Feminists with Neo-Marxist and Socialist orientation argued that there existed a patriarchal super-structure cross cutting all social, economic, legal and political structures. They argued that unless and until a change was brought into overall structures, providing women with (mere) education/training, health services, and technology was not going to bring any substantive change. They further argued that women were exploited through their unpaid work and they were barred from access to productive resources (Buvinic 1983; Loutfi 1982; Rogers 1979). The advocacy expanded to women's access to productive resources. They demanded that there needed to be a structural adjustment from patriarchal to equitable for both men and women. Furthermore, the WAD discourse also included the debate of inequalities/inequities between the North and the South and the resultant impoverishment, inequality and marginalization of women in developing countries (Beneria and Sen 1981; Mohanty 1991a; Sen and Grown 1987; Tiano 1987; Young 1993). Hence, the WAD imperatives are both structural adjustments between nations and within nations. WAD discourse questions the distributive aspects of both the international economic order and the intra-national gender order. Additionally, WAD questions the capitalist mode of production system and the resultant appropriation of women's (unpaid) labour.

With WAD advocacy, policies were formulated based on equity approach. Programmes were developed focusing on women's access to credit and employment. Emphasis was also given to women's equal participation in development. Additional programmes were launched on awareness creation for women about their relative position and recognition of their inherent potentials. So the emphasis was not only on improving the condition of women from bad to better but also changing their position from sub-ordinate to equal as men.

Paradigm Shift Towards Gender and Development (GAD)

The women's movement of 1960s that started and prevailed in the West expanded to be global during the 1970s and spread widely in terms of the dialogue and debate during 1980s. Two kinds of women's movements—the

feminist movement of the West and the Third World WID movement—came into conversing points during late 1970s and 1980s. Various world conferences on women contributed to women all over the world to converge and converse.

Within the Western Feminism, the Post Modernists/Post Structuralists questioned the basic assumption of the “universal feminism” within Liberal Feminism and the Marxist Feminism. The acknowledgment of “plurality” among women by Post Modernist/Post Structuralist feminists contributed to the understanding of different problems needing differential treatment for women from different race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation (Beasley 1999; Mandell 1998). The Third World WID advocates/practitioners and feminists alike further argued that the Third World women’s oppression and discrimination could not be isolated from the consequences of colonialism. They further argued that the Western feminism was ‘hegemonic’ and ‘white ethnocentric’ and they detested Western feminists’ viewing of Third World women as ‘victims’ and/or ‘beneficiaries’ (Mohanty 1991a and 1991b). In fact, the First (at Mexico City, 1975) and the Second (at Copenhagen, 1980) World Conferences on Women did not go smoothly in terms of the dialogue between the women of the First World and the Third World. The North-South issue came up as a matter of strong contention. Women from the South challenged the notion of “global sisterhood” saying that not all women shared an identical interest. The interest of the women from the First World was “equality”, while it was “development” for the women from the Third World, and it was “peace” for the women from the Second World, i. e., the Socialist Block. The theme of world conferences and the decade for women as “Equality, Development and Peace” were, in fact, a compromise between the interests of women from all three worlds. It was only during the Third World Conference (at Nairobi, 1985) after a long dialogue and debate that a common ground was established on the basis that women’s category varied according to the political and the economic context and that “women are not homogeneous”. The activists, academics, and development practitioners alike critiqued each other’s view points, modified their own standpoints, and converged into a common platform which is based on “diversity” rather than “homogeneity” (Basu 1995; Friedan 1976; Kabeer 1994; Women’s Feature Service 1992).

The Decade (1976-85) and the World Conferences on Women to follow provided ample opportunities to dialogue, debate, and discourse to come up

with all encompassing perspective on women's concerns. So, it was in the form of a global feminist movement that brought "gender" as the central theoretical thinking and research. A "gender perspective in development" was then brought into effect with an argument that to bring women into the centre stage of development the existing gender relations need to be re-examined and reconstructed.

The background built up by tabling of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) at the UN in 1981 and subsequent ratification by various countries in the years to follow gave an added impetus to the advocacy of gender equity and equality. The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985) also revealed that development concerns could not compartmentalize women's diverse preoccupations and issues as "women specific" problems. During this period "empowerment approach" came forth as means to achieve gender equity and equality.

Gender and Development in 1990s

Upon the common ground built up during the 1980s, gender concern was founded as a crucial imperative in all development and human rights conventions. The Rio Earth Summit (1992) put forward the inter-relationship of women with the environment and their dynamic role in sustainable development. At Vienna Conference (1993) women's rights were recognized to be human rights, and that human rights and sustainable development were not two separate spheres but complementary. This led to the use of women's human rights framework to achieve sustainable development. In the Cairo ICPD (1994) women's empowerment, their reproductive health and reproductive rights were placed at the centre of population and development policies. At Copenhagen Social Summit (1994) gender equality was recognized to be the key to eliminate poverty and enhance social development. The Beijing Conference (1995) among 12 critical areas of concern, identified women's human rights, violence against women and women in armed conflict also as areas of development concern. "The girl child" as a special category of women was brought into focus during Beijing Conference. So, women's empowerment and women's rights were established as the key to development during 1990s (Harcourt 1999; Whelan 1998). After Beijing, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) identified, i) globalization and impact on women, ii) science, technology and women in the new information age, iii) women in the leadership, and iv) human security and

social protection of women as four emerging key issues, which were to be addressed at the advent of the millennium.

So in the 1990s within the framework of women's human rights, concerns like environment, violence against women, etc., are also incorporated as women's development concern along with education, health, technology, employment, and access to and control over productive resources. The 1970s' focus on women was readjusted from women's productive role to their "triple role" (productive, reproductive, and community/social roles). The advocacy also evolved from efficiency approach (during 1970s) to equity approach (during 1980s) to equality and empowerment approach (in early 1990s) and then into rights approach (in late 1990s).

To operationalize the Beijing Platform for Action, mainstreaming gender concern in all development endeavours was recognized as the strategic imperative, which got reinforced in the Beijing +5 Outcome Document. There was a shift in development programmes from "women specific programmes" to "gender responsive/sensitive programmes". The sensitization and agency of men for women's concern was also perceived. Affirmative actions and positive discrimination in favor of women for equity and equality were articulated. With the advent of the democratic movement into the world politics, the emphasis on promoting women's "self determination" through their political empowerment was strongly recommended.

Women's Concerns in Nepal's Development Agenda

During early 1950s, Nepal experienced its first democratic political system. During this period Nepal became a member of the United Nations and it also formulated its first five-year plan for economic development in 1956. Women as a category were considered then as development beneficiaries. Focus on women was on their reproductive role as housewives and mothers. In 1956 Women Training Centre was established in the Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development. Training of trainers was conducted mainly in home economics/science, such as nutrition, childcare, family planning, knitting and sewing, kitchen gardening and poultry raising (Pradhan 1979) .

Into the Global Bandwagon

Nepal actively participated in the International Women's Year and the First World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975. In the same year marking the occasion, Nepal amended *Muluki Ain* (National Code) to grant

inheritance right to daughters if they remained unmarried up to the age of 35 years. In 1977, Women Service Coordination Committee (WSCC) was established at the Social Service National Coordination Council (SSNCC) with an objective of expanding development and welfare activities for women.

The Status of Women Study conducted by the Centre for Economic Development and Administration at Tribhuvan University in 1979 produced a series of documents on both academic and policy value. This mammoth research work, for the first time, documented the contribution made by Nepalese women to the national economy and became instrumental towards sensitizing policy makers to the recognition of women's productive role, which contributed in the inclusion of a separate WID chapter in the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-1985). In this Plan, with the recognition of women's productive role, an "efficiency approach" was adopted towards women in development. In order to operationalize the WID policy formulated in the Sixth Plan, the Women Development Section (later upgraded to a Division) was established at the Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development in 1980. In the same year Nepal participated in the Second World Conference on Women at Copenhagen. Returning back from Copenhagen and committing to WID, the Plan of Action for Women in Development was formulated by WSCC at SSNCC in 1982.

In 1985, the Seventh Five-Year Plan in addition to the "efficiency approach" took "participatory approach" to WID policy committing to make women active participants of development. The same year Nepal participated in the Third World Conference on Women at Nairobi and intended its commitment to the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategy. In 1988 Women Development Division was established at the Ministry of Labour with an objective of raising the efficiency and productivity of women labour force.

Establishment of Democracy and Transformation in Women's Advocacy

The Democratic Movement of 1990 marked a clear change in WID not only in terms of its approach but also the concept and the scope. Though it is difficult to assert that there is full-fledged women's movement in Nepal, the democratic political atmosphere definitely provided opportunities for Nepalese women to express their feminist consciousness and advocacy. After the restoration of democracy, scores of women's non-government organizations were formed and became active in the implementation of

development programmes, women's awareness raising and advocacy. A strong ground for advocacy was constructed when the democratic Constitution of 1991 provided Nepalese women with the "right to equality" with men. The ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) without reservation in 1991, armed Nepalese women with an additional advocacy tool.

At the governmental level, WID Chapter in the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-1997) emphasized the "Mainstreaming Policy". This resulted in the establishment of WID units and other WID functionaries in various ministries and the National Planning Commission itself. Women Farmers' Development Division was established at the Ministry of Agriculture in 1992. In 1993, Child and Women Development Section was established at the National Planning Commission; Women Education Unit was established at the Ministry of Education; and the WID cell was established at Water and Energy Commission Secretariat in the Ministry of Water Resources. The National Council for Women and Child Development was established at the National Planning Commission in 1995.

During this time Nepal participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China in 1995. Marking the occasion, a large group of women from Nepal participated in the NGO Forum at Huarliou City of China. It provided an opportunity to Nepalese women to build up networking globally and strengthen women's advocacy within Nepal. Immediately after Beijing Conference, the Ministry of Women (and Social Welfare) was established in 1995. Soon after its establishment, the Ministry declared its policy as "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" and became active in programme formulation and implementation, drafting of bills and sensitization/awareness creation activities that were to lead towards gender equality and women's empowerment. One such remarkable activity that the Ministry performed was the drafting of Women's Equality Bill in 1996 and forwarding it to the Ministry of Law and Justice. In the same year, the Ministry organized a "National Women's Convention" participated by more than five hundred women representing all 75 districts of Nepal. The Ministry also formulated the "Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: National Plan of Action (NPA)" to operationalize the Beijing Platform for Action in 1996. The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) made its commitment to women by stipulating its working policies as mainstreaming, gender equality and women's empowerment.

In the academic arena, WID was incorporated as one paper in Home Science, Masters' Degree curriculum at Tribhuvan University in 1990. This established WID as a body of knowledge with an academic value. Realizing its academic value and recognizing its technical/professional need and viability, the Post-Graduate Diploma in Women's Studies was instituted at Tribhuvan University in 1996. Similarly, many NGOs and private (consulting) companies became active in research and training programmes in gender and development. This way, academic exercises are also continuing to contribute to gender and development understanding and practice.

Critique

Initially, the WID approach was that of integrating women into development, and it emerged as a project and/or programme focused approach. The focus on women was mainly accommodated in the anti-poverty approach endorsing the World Bank's 'Redistribution with Growth' strategy and the ILO's 'Basic Needs' strategy. In this way, the WID policy approach was less threatening and more tolerable to male-dominated agencies in both donors and host countries. These programmes demanded minimal change in the existing structure in terms of gender hierarchy. However, in the 1980s, the academics/scholars, women's advocates and activists pointed out that it is not so much a question of women's issues in isolation but in relation to men. They pointed out that the patriarchal superstructure is overbearing the social, economic, political and legal structures leading to women's sub-ordination, subjugation and appropriation. They demanded that male-biased institutions, especially those unfavourable to women, be transformed arguing that a mere transformation of the reproductive economy to facilitate women's participation in the productive economy (i. e., efficiency approach) is not enough. A need to transform the productive economy itself (i. e., equity and equality approach) was recognized seeking structural adjustment (Elson 1995; Kabeer 1994; Moser 1993; Young 1993). It has created a lot of discomfort in male-dominated structures in the host countries, in the donor world, and the whole UN system. It is manifested by the snail pace of the operationalization of "mainstreaming" (which originated during the mid-1980s) except for a few countries especially the Nordic countries.

WID entered placidly in Nepal's development agenda and policies in the later half of the 1970s and 1980s centred about welfare approach and efficiency approach. As it approached towards 1990s, Nepal's changed

political environment towards democracy, its widening international commitment and the augmentation of a powerful national advocacy fueled a stronger demand for gender equity and gender equality. It has created a lot of uneasiness and annoyance among and between decision-makers and women's advocates. On the one hand, bills such as Muluki Ain Sansodhan Bill for women's equality and the Abortion Bill tabled in the 11th Session of the Parliament in 1997 speaks loudly about the length of women's advocacy for equality and right. This endeavour to some extent, received support at certain political and bureaucratic levels. Otherwise, the bills would not reach there. On the other hand, these Bills to be lapsed, to be reformulated and renamed, to be re-tabled but to receive minimum priority in Parliamentary discussions and voting during the 15th and 16th sessions speaks even louder about the extent of the reluctance and resistance at the higher political level.

Similarly, though the government policies seemingly became more progressive over the years (1980-1997, Sixth to Ninth Five-Year Plans) nothing concrete was accomplished to match the policy with action. In 1980, the Sixth Plan committed to raise the efficiency of women. In 1985, the Seventh Plan further committed towards equal participation of women on the same footing as with men in the development process. In 1992, the Eighth Plan committed to make women participate in the mainstream of development, while in 1997, the current Ninth Plan has made the commitment of gender equality and women's empowerment. Although there has been some crucial initiatives targeted to women since 1980s' nothing concrete has been achieved in changing women's condition and position. Some remarkable initiatives are micro-credit programmes, awareness and sensitization programmes and adoption of gender mainstreaming methodology in data base and the endeavour to engender the Census 2001. However, almost all of these endeavours are rather peripheral than central. The central issues such as amendment of discriminatory laws, bringing a critical mass of women in decision-making positions and making women equal partners in development agenda setting remained abated.

In the period of almost two decades (Sixth Plan to Ninth Plan), though the policies took up radical steps from efficiency approach to equality and empowerment approach, the development actions spiraled deeper down into the whirlpool of conservative welfare approach. During the budget allocation of fiscal year 2000/2001, out of the total budget only 0.29% was allocated to the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare. Within the Ministry

also, only 38% was allocated to development programmes for women. Similarly, within other line agencies the budget allocated to women's programmes are minimal resulting in the total allocation of budget to women specific programmes to be just 0.48% of the total budget (Bhadra 2001). The Ministry of Defense received 4.25% of the total budget, which is almost nine times more than the budget allocated to all women specific programmes, speaks loud of the lack of governmental commitment for women's empowerment.

Beyond 2000: The Elementary Critical Mass

The advocacy for WID and GAD has evolved from welfare and efficiency of women to equality, empowerment and rights of women. The Beijing +5 review, "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" strongly reaffirmed the commitments made in Beijing Platform for Action with inclusion of additional emerging issues. The Outcome Document of the review stipulated timeframe to end discrimination against women by requesting member States to eliminate legislative gaps through removal of discriminatory laws by 2005. In addition, agenda for signing the Optional Protocol to CEDAW was also put forward as one of the greatest achievements in the area of human rights of women (Preliminary Analysis of the Beijing +5 Outcome Document, June 2000, accessed through internet).

However, to achieve the preferred transformation women's advocacy needs to be more intense in holding the States accountable. Noeleen Heyzer, the chief of United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), confirms that the priorities of women in the 21st century are anchored in two key concerns; the economic empowerment of women and the political empowerment of women. It comprises ample food for thought to Nepalese women.

The economic empowerment is to get hands on those productive resources of which women's share was unjustly appropriated. The political empowerment is to get into positions of power from where policies and laws are formulated, executed and monitored by women, recognizing the rightful agency of women. On the one hand, a critical mass (at least one-third) of women as political decision-makers needs to be at every level (local to national) of decision making. On the other hand, women are also realizing their power as electorates. Nepalese women are already questioning, "Why

should we vote for those who sit on our bills? Is not it a time that we speak political language? Is not it a time that we use our electorate power to have our kinds and the kinds who realize and recognize women as human at the apex bodies of decision-making?"

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RESEARCH NOTE

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SOLAR WATER PUMPING SYSTEM IN SIRAHA DISTRICT

Mangala Shrestha

Introduction

This article is based upon a research study conducted for Alternate Energy Promotion Center of HMG in 2000. It assesses and analyzes the status of Solar Water Pumping System SWPS installed for drinking, domestic and irrigation purposes in Todke, Bhulke and Phulbariya villages of Siraha district. The findings of the study, therefore, will be useful for the planners, administrators, concerned organized village people, researchers and students. The overall objective of the article is to explain the present status of solar PV water pumping system in Siraha district to assess performance and problems of SWPS, to assess impacts of SWPS in Siraha district; and to provide suggestions on how solar SWPS can be made more popular as well as affordable for village people.

Approach and Methodology

The methodology adopted in the study is qualitative and quantitative. The study is mainly field based and descriptive. It uses both primary and secondary sources of information. The secondary data were collected from WECS, NSES, AEPC, National Planning Commission Secretariat, Center for Renewable Energy, Center for Energy Studies of Institute of Engineering, REDP of UNDP, Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology and other related organizations. The primary data is collected through field visits. Three sets of semi-structured questionnaires were developed and served to the members of the user groups of SWPS and manufactures or organizations

installing the systems. The field survey was conducted during May 2000. Taking interview with the members of user groups of SWPS who were using water for drinking purposes and irrigation purposes, semi-structured questionnaires were filled up. The qualitative data was collected through focus group discussion with the user group members and key informants of the village. Three sites of the Siraha as Todke, Bhulke and Phulbariya were included in the study.

Status of Solar Water Pumping System in Siraha District

The status of solar water pumping system in three sites of Siraha district is described in Table 1.

Table 1: Purpose of SWPS in Todke, Bhulke and Phulbariya

District	Site	Domestic consumption	Irrigation purposes	Both	Remarks
Siraha	Todke	1			Community user
	Bhulke	1			Community user
	Phulbaria		1		NGO/Community user

Source: Field Survey

The detailed investigation and analysis of SWPS of the above-mentioned sites is described below.

SWPS in Todke

The site is located at Lalpur VDC, Ward no. 3 of Siraha district. The year of installation was November 1999. The source of water for pumping is deep well. It was drilled on March 1980 and the static water level is 75' and the bore size is 10" x 6". Maximum discharge at maximum head from this SWPS is 25 m³ per day. The Pump set manufacture is Grundfos and Pump set model number is 3A-10. Regarding the performance of SWPS in Todke it is successfully running since installation.

It was found from the field visit that 150 families benefited from SWPS.

The submersible pump was installed at a depth of about 30m from the ground level with 2' dia riser pipe and outlet is connected to the existing reservoir tank. From the date of installation, the system is pumping about 25-

35 m³ water per day. At present, the system is working smoothly. The community peoples with the assistance from ECCA repair and maintains the system whenever required. The Supplier Company takes the responsibility of repairing and maintaining the pump.

SWPS in Bhulke

The site is located at ward-number 5, Bhulke village in Siraha district. The year of installation was November 1996. The source of water for pumping is deep well. The static water level of the pump is 60 ft. and bore size is 10"x6". The community owned this SWPS. The capacity (Wp) is 60 kw. Maximum discharge at maximum head from this SWPS is 30m³/day.

The Pump set manufacture is Groundfos and Pump set model number is Groundfos 5A. In Bhulke, 80 families are being benefited from SWPS at present. The performance of the pump was found satisfactory. The pump is successfully running since the date of installation. The system is designed to deliver an average of 50,000 liters water per day. But the actual performance is slightly low, which is about 40,000 liters per day. This is due to the deeper water level of the well.

SWPS in Phulbariya

The site is located at ward-number 8, Phulbariya village in Siraha district. It was installed in August 1998. Resource Multiplication and Research Service Center for Agriculture Sustainability implemented the project with the technical assistance from Nepal Solar Electricity Company. The source of water for pumping is deep well. The module capacity (Wp) is 70m. The Pump set manufacturer is Shurflo, USA. The pump type is submersible and Pump set model number is 9325-043-101/014973. As regards the performance of SWPS in Phulbariya, it is working satisfactory and running successfully since installation. The long flexible 1/2" pipe connected to the solar pump is taken to the point of MRSC project. Maximum discharge at maximum head is 136 liters per hour.

'With the help of SWPS, wheat farming was introduced in 3 ropanies even in winter season. The production was satisfactory. The users' are happy and satisfied with the system. The users repair and maintain the system whenever required. The supplier takes the responsibility of maintaining the pump.

Impact of SWPS on Health and Hygiene: A question was asked to the user members of SWPS for domestic purposes whether there was any impact

from SWPS on their health and hygiene and their family members after the installation of SWPS in their locality.

Table 2: Perception of Respondents Regarding the Impact of SWPS on Health and Hygiene.

Sites	Impact of PVWPS on Health and Hygiene		Remarks
	Yes	No	
Todke	√	—	Positive
Bhulke	√	—	Positive
Phulbariya	√	—	Positive

Source: Field Survey

Almost all of the user respondents of SWPS for household purposes agreed that after the installation of SWPS there was a change in their health and their family members due to sufficient supply of quality water.

Regarding a question whether they had to face any health problems related to water borne diseases only 20% respondent said yes as against 80% who reported that they did not face health problem related to water borne diseases during last year.

Of the respondents who reported of health problem during last year 20% reported the problem as diarrhea and typhoid.

Similarly almost all the respondents reported that after the installation of SWPS they found some changes in sanitation around their houses. They found the clean environment after they received water from SWPS.

Impact of SWPS on Men, Women and Children: The impact of SWPS as experienced by respondent users of SWPS for domestic purposes is presented in Table 3,4, and 5 respectively.

The result from the analysis of data indicates that 60% respondents found an increase in their daily work schedules and leisure time activities and time to teach children and saving as against 40% who reported the decrease in those activities and did not find any changes. Similarly, 40% reported an increase in income generating activities, while about 60% did not find any change. Almost 100% of the respondents reported positive change in health and hygiene. The respondents, who were using SWPS only for drinking water

purposes, did not find any change in agricultural production as vegetable production and livestock raising from SWPS. About 80% reported the decrease of expenditure after the installation of SWPS while 20% did not find any change.

Table 3: Impact of SWPS on Men

S.N.		Increased %	Decreased %	Same %	Total % (N=5)
1	Daily work schedule	60	20	20	100
2	Sleeping hours	40	-	60	100
3	Leisure time activities	60	20	20	100
4	Income generating activities (specify in monthly income)	40	-	60	100
5	Time to teach children	60	-	40	100
6	Health and hygiene	100	-	-	100
7	Income	20	-	80	100
8	Agriculture:				
	a. Livestock raising	-	100	100	
	b. Vegetable production	-	100	100	
9	Saving	60	-	40	100
10	Expenditure	-	80	20	100

Source: Field Survey

About 40% respondents reported the increase of women's daily work schedule, sleeping hours, leisure time activities and agricultural production, whereas about 40% reported the decrease in women's daily work schedule and 20% did not find any change. Similarly, 20% found the decrease in leisure time activities of women, and 40% did not find any change. Regarding income generating activities the entire respondent did not find any change in women's activities. Likewise 40% viewed that there is no change in time to teach children by women. As regards agricultural production, 60% did not find any change. About 60% reported the increase in saving, while 40% reported the same. Likewise, 20% found the increase in expenditure while 40% found the decrease and 40% found no change.

Table 4: Impact of SWPS on Women

S. N.		Increased %	Decreased %	Same %	Total % (N=5)
1	Daily work schedule	40	40	20	100
2	Sleeping hours	40	-	60	100
3	Leisure time activities	40	20	40	100
4	Income generating activities (specify in monthly income)	-	-	100	100
5	Time to teach children	60	-	40	100
6	Health and hygiene	100	-		100
7	Income	20	-	80	100
8	Agriculture:				
	a. Livestock raising	40	-	60	100
	b. Vegetable production	40	-	60	100
9	Saving	60	-	40	100
10	Expenditure	20	40	40	100

Source: Field Survey

About 40% respondents reported that daily work schedule of the children increased after the installation of SWPS, while 60% viewed it as the same. As regards the sleeping hours and leisure time activities, 20% reported the increase, while 80% did not feel any change. Regarding the change in income generating activities of the children, 80% did not answer and 40% mentioned no change.

Table 5: Impact of SWPS on Children

S.N.		Increased %	Decreased %	Same %	Total % N=5
1	Daily work schedule	40	-	60	100
2	Sleeping hours	20	-	80	100
3	Leisure time activities	20	-	80	
4	Income generating activities (specify in monthly income)	-	-	40	100
5	Health and hygiene	80	-	20	100

Source: Field Survey

Impact of SWPS on Agricultural Production

The SWPS is being used for irrigation purposes only in Phulbaria. The main purpose of SWPS for irrigation is to increase the agricultural production of the land. The benefit from the production should exceed the cost of SWPS while analyzing the cost/benefit ratio of SWPS. The source of water for cultivation before the installation of SWPS in Phulbariya was only rainwater and manual parting from the river and well.

Table 6: Average Size of Land Holding of User Respondents

Site	Average size of land holding	Categories of land	Remarks
Phulbariya	17 katha	Community owned	Managed by NGO

Source: Field Survey

Cost and Income Comparison before and after the installation of SWPS is presented in Table 7 and 8. The cost comparison is based upon the views of user respondents of SWPS for irrigation purposes of Phulbariya. It was found that the costs have been increased after the installation of SWPS.

Table 7: Cost Comparison before and after the Installation of SWPS

Site	Cost per year					Total
	Seed	Labor	Fertilizer	Pesticide	Marketing	others
Phulbariya: (MRSC managed land)						
Before	2000/-	14400/-	14400/-	—	NA	30800/-
After	3800/-	36000/-	36000/-	—	NA	75800/-

Source: Field Survey

Table 8: Income Comparison before and after the Installation of SWPS

Site	Income earned per year		Remarks
	Before installation of SWPS (yearly)	After installation of SWPS (yearly)	
Phulbariya (MRSC managed)	7,800/-	1,32,000/-	community owned and managed by NGO

Source: Field Survey

Table 9: Views of Respondents Regarding the Changes Experienced in Income, Expenditure and Saving after the Installation of SWPS in Phulbariya

Site	Changes in income expenditure and saving			Remarks
	Increased	Decreased	Same	
Phulbariya Income Expenditure Saving	-	-	-	Positive impact

Source: Field Survey

It was found that respondents of the Phulbariya reported to have increased in income, expenditure and saving.

The 17 katha land is under the ownership of community people and is being managed by MRSC a local NGO. Before the installation of SWPS the NGO earned Rs. 7800/- only. After the installation of SWPS due to the irrigation facility the organization started farming additional vegetables and fruits like mango, litchi, guava, banana, papaya, pineapple and so on.

Time Allocation of Men/Women in Water Collection before the Installation of SWPS

It was described earlier that before the installation of SWPS the source of water for domestic purpose is river, pond and well. The men and women had to spend much more time to collect/ fetch water before the installation of SWPS since they had to go far from the house.

A question was asked to the users of SWPS how much time they have to spend to collect/fetch the water before the installation of SWPS in their area. The information received from the user respondents is presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Time Spent by Men/Women to Collect the Water before the Installation of SWPS

Time	Percentage	Average time spent to collect water
Less than half hour	—	
Half hour	50%	one hour
One hour	25%	
More than one hour (1.5 hour)	25%	
Total	100%	

Source: Field Survey

Note: Applied only for Todke and Bhulke

For the 50% respondents, it took half an hour to collect the water before the installation of SWPS while for other respondents it took about one hour or more than one hour (25% each). The average time spent by men/women to collect the water before the installation of SWPS is found to be one hour per day. After the installation of SWPS the less time is spent to collect the water for their household consumption.

In the case of irrigating the land before the users have to depend only on rain or have to irrigate by manual water parting which have to collect from river, pond and well. It took more time so that they grow only maize or cultivate vegetables only on the limited land for their daily consumption purposes.

Linkages between SWPS and Environment

SWPS is environmental friendly technology. It produces no noise while in operation and produces no pollution in air and land. Besides, SWPS helps in better conservation and management of water and agricultural land. There is no environmental effect from SWPS. Instead, SWPS provides safe water. It helps in promoting good health to the community people and in irrigating land

in Phulbariya. In all three sites of Siraha district, there is no adverse environmental effect from SWPS.

Users' Experience with Performance of SWPS

All the pumps installed for drinking purposes and irrigation purpose in three sites are working smoothly.

The opinion of respondent users regarding the performance of SWPS in Todke, Bhulke and Phulbariya is presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Opinion of Users Regarding the Performance of SWPS

Site	Satisfied/ Unsatisfied	Remarks
Todke	satisfied but not fully	the users wanted to have more supply of water (working smoothly)
Bhulke	satisfied	working smoothly
Phulbariya	satisfied	working smoothly

Source: Field Survey

The respondent users of Bhulke and Phulbariya sites are found satisfied. The user respondents of Todke reported that they are satisfied but not fully, since the water discharge from the pump is insufficient all the time as per their need for all the user families.

However, the SWPS can provide drinking water without requiring any fuel or extensive maintenance. SWPS may allow people to do more productive activities and can thus improve the quality of life. The drudgery of women and children who otherwise keep themselves engaged in bringing water from far off distances can be reduced significantly. SWPS has no moving parts and hence is highly reliable and durable and is modular in nature for future expansion.

Cost-effectiveness of PV pumping system depends upon various factors such as climate, water resources, and demand for water, technically good institutional and economic characteristics. The summary of factors favouring PV water pumps in Siraha district is presented below:

Table 12: Factors Favoring SWPS in Three Sites of Siraha District

Factors	Favorable conditions
Climate/water resource	• Solar irradiation high in sunny days • Static lift not great • Seasonal variation in water depth small
Demand	• Water demand neither high nor peaky, irrigated land area small • Conveyance losses low • Field application efficiency good • Farmers/people prefer the system
Technical	• Array efficiency good • Sub system efficiencies good • Lives of principal components long • Wind regime poor • Low sustained human power inputs
Economic	• Capital costs subsidized/ Assisted • Water has high value • Diesel fuel is expensive and supplies are erratic

Source: Field Survey and Observation

Problems of SWPS

Though the application of solar energy has a number of attractions it faces some problem, that vary from site to site. The main common disadvantages of SWPS are high initial capital cost and low output in cloudy weather. Though solar pumping system is designed to be maintenance free for lifetime of the equipment, it needs some repair and maintenance costs in some cases. In some cases, cables (wiring) may damage due to rats and human errors. Most common problem of the Shurflo submersible pumps is non-cleaning of the filters of the pumps, which reduces the efficiency. Most of the fault for Groundfo inverters is due to human error. Other major problem in repair and maintenance is due to well conditions where deep tube well solar pumping system is used. Similarly, problems in the well are mainly lower discharges which cause draw down, sand blowing due to damage of filters etc. Since the most of the solar pump are installed in old wells replacing the diesel pump or others this is the critical in the deep tube well pumping.

The specific problems found from the field visits in each site are as follows:

Problems of SWPS in Todke

- Incapability of users to handle simple repair and maintenance works
- Lack of spare parts in the local market. The users have no spare parts of the installed system in their possession.
- Lack of trained manpower at the local level
- User groups are too large and it is very difficult to manage for the caretaker of the SWPS. The problem of distribution of water was also aggravated. The large group did not get sufficient water according to their need, since the capacity to pump the water is not sufficient for existing user families.
- Lack of responsibility among user groups
- In some instances, dry running of pumps, which affect the inverter system
- Water contains fine silt, which caused the impellers and rubber bush of the pump to corrode.

Problems of SWPS in Bhulke

- Array did not include by pass diodes and that the water level in the well was deeper than expected. The community people estimated the water level at 35-45 feet, while the actual level was measured be about 68 feet. The water may drop further during the dry season.
- Users lack the knowledge about what plumbing parts would be available in the local market.
- Lack of training on repair and maintenance for the community people so that even for a minor repair and maintenance the supplier had to send the technician from Kathmandu.
- Lack of trained manpower at the local level
- Lack of awareness among people
- Lack of responsibility among user groups
- In some instances, dry running of pumps, which affect the inverter system

Problems of SWPS in Phulbariya

- Lacks sustainability programme
- Lack of trained manpower at the local level
- The pump is being used for irrigation and it needs water in time so delay

in maintenance may create headache to them. The technicians were not locally available and they had to send the parts to manufacturer, it can take long period. The equipment needed constant repair and maintenance after 3 years of functioning.

Findings of Focus Group Discussion

To acquire relevant information, focus group discussions with users of SWPS in all the three sites were conducted. The outcome of the group discussion is presented below.

- The users received information about the SWPS from different sources, mainly from the organizer, researcher and manufacturers. SWPS are installed as an experimental project at many places. ECCA, SEC/PANAS, NSES, Lotus Energy Company, were the various institutions involved in it.
- In general, the users respond positively about the advantages of SWPS. Easy availability of water made the house hold work easier for women and children. In the group discussion the members of the user group were asked to provide information about the economic condition. The farmers sell their crops in the market and buy their daily requirements like salt, oil, cloth and other needy items, so both the income and expenditure increased equally after the installation of SWPS.
- It was also found that the local people could use the SWPS for the growing of cash crops, by getting micro-irrigation facilities, which would be highly useful to increase their income. The land was dry and useless before the installation of SWPS. After the installation of SWPS they started to produce seasonal and off-the-season vegetables and fruits. The users expected to get more return after few years.
- With regards to the maintenance of the system, the users informed that the training was given to the local people, and they can repair the minor problems like loosed wire connection. If the users can not repair the system, they inform the organizer/ installers and the technicians repair it promptly. The farmers are satisfied with the system and willing to pay small amount (Rs. 60-100) per month for the use of water because they think it will help to raise funds for repair of the system.
- The users were of the opinion that more SWPS should be installed, as the SWPS is highly useful for farming cash crops and vegetables. They

also expressed the view that since full payment for the system is beyond their capacity, the government should provide subsidy and interest free loan for a long period.

- In conclusion, the users feel that the system is useful for the improvement of their lifestyle, health, economic condition and social well being.
- The Todke system has not experienced any major problem till date. A minor technician is appointed by the users committee to take care of the system.
- The Bhulke system is also operating satisfactorily. The caretaker nominated by the user is committed and trained by the supplier of the system, is not paid for his services.
- Similarly, the system installed in Phulbariya has not experienced any major problems since the installation. Since the system is owned by a NGO, it is well care-taken.

Conclusion

Solar energy in Nepal is abundantly available and is renewable. The SWPS can be used easily for water supply for domestic purposes and irrigation purposes. Solar water pumping is best suited for villages because of the small quantities of water involved and the high value of delivering clean water for drinking. It also can be used for additional supply of water for domestic use purposes in urban areas.

In case of SWPS for irrigation, its application is suitable for micro irrigation for cash crops like vegetables farming, floriculture and fruit farming. Less than one kilowatt capacity of PV pumping systems are popular in rural areas of Nepal because of the modular few moving parts, little maintenance and high reliability. If the SWPS was properly managed, it is feasible and economically viable for rural as well as urban areas of Nepal for drinking water supply and irrigating the farm. The performance of SWPS in rural areas is found to be satisfactory and its impact is found to be positive with regard to present situation. There is a positive effect of SWPS on health and hygiene due to clean and safe water supply. Farmers can grow cash crops as vegetables and fruits and develop agricultural production with the help of irrigation facility from SWPS.

The people should be mobilized by creating awareness and providing general training on repair and maintenance of SWPS. Similarly monitoring

and evaluation of the system is needed from the concerned agency involved. Thus, if regular care in operation /maintenance has been given, the system will operate smoothly. The SWPS is viable technique for the country for supply of drinking water and irrigation of the farm field.

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BOOK REVIEW

De la Disparition des chefs: Une Anthropologie Politique Népalaise. 2000. P. Ramirez. CNRS (Collection Monde Indien), Paris. Pages 370, glossary, bibliography, index, 22 maps, 16 diagrams, 2 tables, 16 plates. ISBN 2-271-05716-7.

Nepali intellectuals from the dominant Parbatiya, Bahun-Chetri, or 'Indo-Nepalese' group often complain that foreign anthropologists are only interested in the minority 'tribals' nowadays known by the epithet *janajati*. This is not in fact true: ethnographic monographs on the Parbatiyas written by Westerners include several that are among the very best written on Nepal, including little-known and unrecognized classics (little-known and unrecognized outside Himalayanist circles, that is) such as Lynn Bennett's *Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters* (1983, Columbia University Press) and Linda Stone's *Illness and Feeding the Dead in Hindu Nepal: An Ethnographic Analysis* (1988, E. Mellon Press). What is true is that if one subscribes to an ethnographic law of proportional representation, whereby Parbatiyas should have 40% of the ethnography written about them because they constitute 40% of the population, then it is probably true that the Parbatiyas suffer from under-representation. On the other hand, they are far *less* under-represented than many other groups, especially those in the Tarai or low-status ones such as Parbatiya Untouchables.

Among those who have written on Parbatiyas only a few have been interested in history and geo-politics: Fürer-Haimendorf, Borgström, and Pfaff-Czarnecka spring to mind. *De la disparition des chefs* is extremely ambitious in this regard, and it covers a lot of ground. A small example of Ramirez's interest in historical geography: he is able (by analysing the lists of candidates in the 1991 election for the whole of the middle hills excluding the Kathmandu Valley) to advance the novel and highly interesting observation that the number of Brahman *thars* increases as you go from west to east

whereas the number of Chetri *thars* decreases -- an interesting phenomenon that he attempts to explain in terms of the different significance of *thar* names for Bahuns and Chetris (p. 157).

Based on fieldwork in the Bahun-dominated Argha Rajasthal, the old capital of the kingdom of Argha in Argha-Khanchi district, west Nepal, Ramirez's book covers in considerable detail the history of the region, the role of the Dasain festival, kinship (including lineage structure, naming, ancestor worship, patterns of deference, the household), agriculture, debt, cooperative work, patron and client relations, and local politics.

There is much impressive detail, but there are also three drawbacks to the way in which Ramirez has chosen to present it, drawbacks which may perhaps be attributable to the work's origin as a PhD thesis. First, so much ground is covered that inevitably some topics are covered superficially. For example, the question of jajmani relations is dealt with by reference to Wisner and the first edition of Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* (p. 230, n. 15): no reference is made to important subsequent work by and insights due to Raheja, Fuller, Quigley, and many others. On the nature of Brahman priesthood, likewise, though some material is given, it is not analysed in any depth. (Although the main research subjects of the book are Brahmans, we learn very little about their 'thought world', i.e. how they view Hinduism, what it means to them to be a Bahun, etc.)

The second problem is that Ramirez shows a surprising reluctance to engage with other scholars, though he is not above criticizing his predecessors in vague and general terms. Most importantly, he goes into great detail on the various and contrasting forms of deference between different categories of relative on the basis of Lynn Bennett's data. He produces new ways of diagramming that data (pp. 189-90). These patterns of deference represent, as she showed and he reiterates, an ethnographic conundrum of considerable significance, since at least two conflicting models are at work at once: daughters both receive deference from their parents *and* give it to them. This leads to enormous complexity when all the different categories of relative are considered. Bennett provided a theory which attempts to explain this complexity and how Parbatiyas can negotiate it: they are operating (a) a patrifocal model of deference to seniors, especially male seniors, and (b) a filiafocal model in which men worship their daughters/sisters. Whether Bennett's interpretation is adequate or not is a key question that anyone interested in hierarchy, kinship, and politics among Parbatiyas surely cannot

avoid. Yet Ramirez, despite using Bennett's data, declines to consider it (p. 184). Another small example of the same attitude comes during Ramirez's valuable discussion of patron-client links and the ways in which individuals seek to negotiate the state bureaucracy. There is no mention at all of Dor Bahadur Bista's book, *Fatalism and Development: Nepal's Struggle for Modernization* (Longman 1991), the best-known, if controversial, recent discussion of these topics.

The third and most important criticism of *De la disparition des chefs* is methodological. After the historical section of the book there are numerous ethnographic generalizations supported neither by examples nor statistics. For example, on p. 232, he states:

The choice an employer makes to entrust a particular task to, and fortiori to set up permanent links with, one worker rather than another is only partly explained by short-term economic considerations... The ties between workers and employers are not limited to the sphere of work alone. As will be seen below, the employer of choice is very often also the preferential creditor.

Nowhere is any case study of a specific employer and employee, creditor and debtor, given. Nor are any statistics given, as elsewhere in the book. The generalizations are plausible enough, but the reader has to take them or leave them. For large sections, the Bhusal Bahuns who were the research subjects, simply disappear. One can speculate that the text refers to them, but it operates on such a high level of generality that one cannot be sure. Detailed case studies dealing with the same community or individuals would have served to tie together the very diverse sections on lineages, economy, caste, and politics together.

Despite these criticisms, *De la disparition des chefs* is an impressive achievement, not just because of its attempt to include so many aspects of life in the middle hills that are not usually found within the covers of the same book, but because of the way in which it builds up to the final chapter on political processes. Suddenly in the last 70 pages the book bursts into life, when Ramirez starts to provide detailed political case studies. It is as if the previous 260 pages of meticulous definitions have been a prolegomenon. The final chapter is as rich in case studies of political conflict as the two previous

chapters are devoid of them.

Ramirez is able to show how lineage-conflict between the two dominant Bhusal groups translated into political opposition at both the local and at the national level. The Purkote Bhusals, being less powerful, early on came to be associated with the opposition (and during the Panchayat period, underground) Congress Party. This had the paradoxical result of leading to the rich and dominant Arghali Bhusals being identified as communist. The detail and subtlety of Ramirez's political analysis deserves to be widely read. One minor point, however, is that occasionally his synoptic maps, on which he has evidently expended much effort, are hard to read, and he makes things harder for his reader by failing to provide straightforward tables of election results in the cases that he is discussing and comparing. One would also like to know whether there are currents of conflict *within* the two Bhusal lineages (he cites the case of another local leader whose own brother belonged to a different party).

It would be very welcome if the entirety of *De la disparition des chefs*, or at least the final 100 pages, were to be translated into English and/or Nepali and published in Kathmandu. In fact two sections, Chapter 2, on the history of the region, and most of chapter 6, on patrons and clients, have already appeared in English in P. Ramirez (ed.) *Resunga: The Mountain of the Horned Sage* (1999, Kathmandu: Himal Books). If Chapter 7 were also made available in a Nepalese journal it would serve as a model for the study of local political processes, clearly demonstrating the advantages of ethnographic background and contextualization. It would also be an extremely significant contribution to the understanding of politics in Nepal today if Ramirez could extend his narrative on Argha-Khanchi up to the present day, explaining and demonstrating the impact of the so-called People's War on the locality about which he has built up such a deep knowledge. Another important contribution from Ramirez, an article on Nepalese Maoist attitudes towards religion, also remains available only in French ('Pour une anthropologie religieuse du Maoïsme Népalais', *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 1997, 99: 47-68.)

The publication of Ramirez's book in a form accessible to Nepali scholars would also go some way to showing that the complaints of metropolitan intellectuals in Kathmandu about Western ethnographers' neglect of the Parbatiyas are unjustified. It is true that the vast majority of anthropological work on the Parbatiyas is not effectively available in Kathmandu, unlike

many well-known monographs on the *janajati* now printed locally and in English (e.g. Pignède's classic account of the Gurungs). This unavailability occurs either because the work in question is out of print and was never published in South Asia, or because it is published by a very small and obscure press, or because it is published in French, German, or Japanese, or simply because it is available only as a Ph.D. Thesis. Whether this contrast in the availability of ethnographies between Parbatiyas and *janajatis* is anything more than a coincidence--whether it reveals something important about the politics of ethnographic knowledge in post-1990 Nepal--is a question that deserves archival and ethnographic research itself.

David N. Gellner

BOOK REVIEW

Gods Are Leaving the Country: Art Theft From Nepal. 1997. Jurgen Schick. White Orchid Press, Thailand. Pages 209. Plates, Map, Index, Bibliography and Appendices. Price ?

The problem of art-theft in Nepal is becoming an alarming one in scale and magnitude. Going by the reports, incidences of such thefts seem only to increase, rather than abate, in the more recent times. Art-theft in Nepal began to be glaringly noticed from the 60s of the last century. The more serious side of art-theft, however, lies in the attitude of indifference adopted by the government officials and government agencies whose job it is to protect and preserve the artistic heritage of the country. One finds an air of total apathy and unconcern and no enterprise to do even the necessary minimum on their part to safeguard the country's artistic heritage. Nor have the mushrooming NGOs in the recent years been able to chalk out any effective schemes to protect Nepal's most precious artistic heritage and prevent their depredations. It requires a lot of personal commitment, dedication and coordination on the part of individuals, offices and organizations at various legislative, administrative and civic levels for tackling this problem in earnest. A sincere effort has never been made from any side in this respect. Several things could be done in which the first would perhaps be the promulgation of a more forceful and comprehensive anti-theft and anti-trafficking laws to cover all kinds of art objects, that would supplement and reinforce the existing Ancient Monuments Protection Act of 1956, and subsequent amendments to it. The second would be to implement these laws on the ground with a greater stringency, in coordination and cooperation with the various organs of the government and other civic bodies responsible for the preservation and safeguard of this art. Preparation of comprehensive inventories and documentation of all the sculptural wealth of the Valley and of Nepal as a whole, with their photographs, would be another effective method for the

preservation of the art objects. Because it would furnish a legal basis to make a claim for their return later and would deter illegal attempts at the removal of the sculptures. Unfortunately, the ingenuity of the Nepalese officials in this regard, to say the least, has been wanting. There is no true desire from the cultural and archaeological departments of the government to do anything substantive to address the problem. If there is any true concern in this regard from any quarters, this is found only among the people of the locality directly affected by it. Thus sculptures and art objects that could be seen lying in the open everywhere, adorning a *hiti*, standing by an open square, or a temple-side, or in a Buddhist *baha* (Jurgen Schick has, therefore, likened the Kathmandu Valley to an open museum) in the Kathmandu Valley until not so long ago, now find themselves suddenly exposed to a new and unknown danger from theft. To meet this threat, local people have been fastening their votary objects in iron chains, or putting them behind gratings and heavy iron bars in a vain bid to save them from disappearing. Local people can think of no other better means than this for protecting their symbols of faith and culture. These measures, however, have proven too weak and flimsy for a determined thief from achieving his objective, although it may give the local people a degree of satisfaction to have done their mite for the safety of these images. Unfortunately, this has led the sculptures to lose their aesthetics and their ambience in their original settings and surroundings in which they had been conceived. It is quite true that there is no country in the world where art objects are hundred percent secure from theft. But people and governments in many countries are alert and armed with adequate legal and policing provisions in their protection. This is where Nepal's case seems most vulnerable. The present book by Jurgen Schick focuses on this and other issues relating to art-theft in and around the Kathmandu Valley from many angles. His book carries photographs of "before-and-after-theft" art objects (mainly of stone-images) in all the known instances. They include those that got missing from their original locations from the start of the early 80s. Altogether, the author has compiled over 180 cases of stolen images, some of which comprise *toranas* and other related art forms depicting diverse Hindu and Buddhist gods and goddesses in metal and wood. A few sculptures included in his inventory were lucky that they escaped theft-attempts. There is probably no true art lover in Nepal or abroad, whose heart will not bleed at the sight of mindless acts of vandalism committed on some of the loveliest art specimens of the Hindu and Buddhist gods and goddesses belonging to the

Licchavi and Malla period – the best period of Nepal's art – sometimes with their heads chopped off, and/or their limbs smashed at random in frustration, when the bid to steal them apparently failed.

Jurgen Schick's writing style is felicitous. His tone evokes a feeling of true and genuine admiration not only for the art of Nepal, but also for its people who created and worship them as their divine. To these people the loss of this art in spiritual and cultural terms is immense, which can be hardly compensated by any other thing. Although he actually mentions no names, he is quite frank about what kind of people both within and outside Nepal could be behind such rackets of art-thefts. He appeals art-buyers in the "West" not to buy stolen works of art and encourage the thieves in their nefarious activity. Otherwise, the unscrupulous dealers in the art-market one day could strip a country bare of all its national treasures. The author had photographed most of these sculptures *in situ* before they were stolen. He has added to these pictures of empty cells and sockets of these images from where they were lifted. Complete with these illustrations, the book delivers a far greater impact and a higher sense of urgency in the reader's mind. All these photographs furnish an "unimpeachable evidence" of the sculptures as belonging to Nepal. To the people who created them, the value of this art cannot be measured in monetary terms. For them, they have a deeper socio-cultural meaning. And it is to them that they turn for prayers as their divines at the time of their distress and rejoicing. They are an inseparable part of themselves and their living, epitomizing their entire culture and sacred traditions. In the background of this, the book's title, therefore, sounds even more poignant.

Jurgen Schick's coming to Nepal in the late 1970s is a fortunate thing to have happened for its art. His book does not merely extol and appreciate Nepalese art, which any number of art critics and art historians before him have already done in glowing terms. His book's utility consists even more in being an inventory of the stone art of the Kathmandu Valley. He would find an image he had photographed earlier gone from its place when he would return to see it after some weeks again. The massive problem of art-theft thus became manifest to him in the course of his work. The book first came out in the German language way back in 1989. The present book is an English edition of the same work with the addition of a few more photographs of images stolen since that date until 1997. Lain S. Bangdel also published his celebrated book on "Stolen Images of Nepal" in Kathmandu in 1989. Thus

Jurgen Schick and Bangdel shared a common concern for Nepal's art-theft. Probably, they also shared their material and exchanged their notes in common, resulting in the production of their identical works around the same time. Bangdel's work is a delight in terms of the high quality of photographic illustrations of the stolen and mutilated sculptures in halftone and polychrome plates. He collated them by tapping a number of individual persons and sources. However, his text is far restrained and muted in terms of discussing the problems of art-theft. Contrariwise, the strength of Jurgen Schick's book lies in the candid and forthright manner in which he has delved into this problem from more than one angle. His writing has a power of jolting the reader. He lets us know about the 1970 UNESCO Convention which is helpful and can be invoked profitably for claiming a stolen work of art back into the country again. The book is also a manual of great practical value thus.

His text, arranged in some 12 short chapters, fall into two broad parts. The first part deals with the problem of art-theft, and the second, with a documentation of all the stolen arts or arts on whom theft attempts were made, but were foiled somehow. The tone of urgency can be gathered by looking at some of his chapter headings. Chapters 1 to 5 are entitled: "The Fate of Old Art in Modern Times—Three Examples from Nepal; Nepal and its Art; Modern Times Come to Nepal; the Great Plundering; and the Threatened World of Nepal's Gods", respectively. He considers the problem of art-theft partly to lie in the sudden and abrupt manner of Nepal's modernisation, and her people's exposure to the materialistic lifestyle of the "West", starting from the decades of the 50s. He writes:

"It is also true that many Nepalese today, having become completely intoxicated by the massive influx of Western life styles, which they are hypnotized by, are already so alienated from their own culture that the theft of the statues of their gods is of little concern to them, if they notice it at all...

Nepal is currently in one of the most critical phases of its history. Still deeply rooted in the past, and at the same time profoundly affected by the encroaching modern age, it has been wobbling around in a culture shock ever since its first encounter with the West. It is all too typical for such a period of sudden change in all aspects of life that many Nepalese today no longer know, and

have not yet relearned, how to value the worth of their own culture and tradition." (p.66)

For, he again adds:

"If things don't change, one can foresee a time, within a few years, when Nepal, "the land of the gods", will be emptied to the point where nothing remains." (p, 67)

But such an attitude may only be a temporary, passing phenomenon -- a cultural amnesia at present by some people of Nepal. People are bound to rediscover their pride in their lost heritage sooner or later. Seemingly, this loss of faith, even in this darkest hour of peril to our cultural heritage, does not necessarily represent the view of all the members of the Nepalese society. People do grieve the loss of their invaluable treasure with despair. Jurgen Schick is right in underlining the fact that this should give no one the right to presume that such arts are better preserved in the collection of rich westerners. He cites the sayings of some of the typical wealthy and presumptuous Western art collectors who seek to justify their acts in these words:

"You're on the wrong track. We're not robbing; we're only protecting. We must take away their art, because they themselves don't take care of it, and we can look after it much better."
(p. 66)

This kind of patronising remarks on the part of some of them are totally repugnant and must be treated with the contempt they deserve.

The most alarming part of the problem of art-smuggling and art-theft in Nepal is due to the protection enjoyed by art racketiers from their high placed patrons among politicians and rulers, granting them immunity in their nefarious activity. With their help, rules get easily bent. Or, officials can be bribed and asked to look away. All organisations, whether in government or private, responsible for art protection, are poorly managed, inefficient and ill-motivated to initiate action from their side in this regard. Jurgen Schick writes about the kind of people who could be engineering such thefts. The price of art has jumped many folds in the international art market, so that thieves have become far more daring in their acts of theft. The iron gratings put up by the local people to save the sculptures are no match to keep the thieves away for

long. We can well see that from what happened to the 11th century Sun image of Saugal tole in Patan (pls. 23 and 24). Despite the iron gratings, they succeeded in wrenching the entire panel of the Sun god away. Jurgen Schick writes:

“No one knows [who are the thieves?]. It may be assumed that the actual thefts are carried out by bands of Nepalese or Indians. But who is behind them? Who organizes the operations and pockets the profit? No one knows for sure. “Rumours are rife, however, that high-placed persons are involved from the Nepalese side, too. It could hardly be otherwise. For how could such a huge quantity of stolen art, including statues that weigh tons, pass undetected through all airport and border checks?

“This does not mean, however, that the West is only the purchaser and not also the procurer. As an example may be cited the case of the Polish diplomat who, having been expelled from Indonesia for such activities, came to Nepal and immediately founded a Polish-Nepalese Friendship Society, whose main activity in following years consisted in conveying art stolen in the Kathmandu Valley safely to Warsaw.

The truth that dawns in the mind after reading Jurgen Schick's book, therefore, is one of continuing anxiety and apprehensions for the safety of the Nepalese art. In fact, little positive action has resulted notwithstanding the UNESCO Convention of 1970 making possible the return of the stolen art, if backed by proper claims. In one or two cases, when stolen art from Nepal has been successfully returned to it, it was mostly owing to the interest and initiative of friendly individuals and governments abroad who returned them voluntarily. Newspapers report the reluctance on the part of the concerned authorities in the Nepalese government even to file simple official request petitions with countries from where a stolen art is to be recovered. The sordid story of the stolen art does not end here. Art objects that do manage to be retrieved find no proper place where they should be housed, so that they can be seen languishing away for years in police stations. With the one exception of the new Patan Art Museum, Nepal cannot boast of a single good museum for art. The Nepalese museums' track record of safety from robbery for its

artefacts is not too high. The National Museum at Chhauni gives cause for little confidence in this regard. The case of other government museums is no better either. Museums in Bhaktapur, Patan and Kathmandu have been busted by thieves in the past with the stolen objects without ever being recovered. In the prevailing grim situation, where thieves are enjoying their powerful patronage, the concern for the preservation and safeguard of the artistic heritage and art treasures of Nepal does not diminish a bit in the immediate future.

Prayag Raj Sharma

This review is dedicated to the fond memory of the late Mr. Hallvard K. Kuløy, a long time friend, who died in Oslo, Norway on 3rd of May, 2001. The present reviewer had been given a copy of the book for review by him a year before he died.